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Shazia Bashir

KUKIL OF KASHMIR



Old City © Afaq Gadda

Kashmir INSIGHT

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PEACE BE GIVEN A CHANCE

Peace is imperative for development and prosperity of the state and hence it is the duty of every individual to work for restoration of peace in this border state which has seen a lot of destruction and devastation during 22 years of turmoil. The people especially in Kashmir Valley have suffered over these years. Now as the winter is over and Civil Secretariat will move to Summer Capital next month, the people in Kashmir Valley should be cautious of the elements misguiding them for their personnel interests to continue disturbance in Kashmir Valley in particular and state in general. Already thousands have been done to death during the turmoil while the economy of the state suffered a great set-back during this period. But now people too should realize that enough is enough and no one will receive anything by harming the peace process or thwarting it as it will harm the interests of people in long run. It is hoped that peace will be provided a chance to survive so that the inflow of tourists this summer may increase and surpass the all previous records. The tourism which is main industry of Kashmir has sustained our economy for years together and it is the guarantee of progressive future of our youth. But the tourism industry will only flourish when a good number of tourists visit Kashmir which is not possible without restoration of total peace in the state. It is expected that the government will also try to make its all efforts to push up the peace process in the state and the same will be reciprocated by the masses equally. The government alone can't do anything in promotion of peace in the state if the people don't render their cooperation to it. And the common man who has suffered a lot during the turmoil should feel no hindrance now in joining hands with those who are working with an objective of promoting peace in the state for the prosperity of its people. The people must keep in mind that the great saints and sages whose





Kashmir was an abode have advocated for peace and spread this message all over. The Lal Ded and Nundrishi surface on top among these Saints and Sufis. We being their aborigines have a duty to carry forward their message and lay an example that Kashmiris are apostils of peace and they will not make any compromise on the same. The people have also seen through the game plan of those who mislead them for years together for their own interests and except the mass killings and destruction they gave nothing to the people. To overcome the losses incurred on the people during the turmoil period it is imperative that people have to make a firm resolve to isolate the enemies of peace once for all and put the state back on rails. This will become possible with a firm resolve of the people alone and they have to engage themselves towards achieving this goal right from today so that a message goes all round that the Kashmiris hate violence and they have said a good buy to it once for all. The people should have firm belief in themselves and with such a resolve the Kashmir will touch to its pristine glory and its hay days will be back. By working for the restoration of total peace in the state the Kashmiris will keep the legacy of their ancestors and saints and sages intact to prove that they believe in co-existence, brotherhood and amity. The people must now realize that if they fail to avail the opportunity and let the peace a chance in the state, it will be they and the coming generations who would be most affected. For the better future of our progeny we have to stand boldly against the detractors of the state and enemies of the peace and throw them away from our lives once for all. Already over last one year there has been a sea change in the state as peace prevailed to a great extent during this period but the efforts are to be redoubled to attain more results.



Shazia Bashir

KUKIL OF KASHMIR

Ayash Arif

It was perhaps in the year 2004 when I was at Jammu, neck deep into the pre-production work of my television Serial 'Gul-e-Bakawali' that I was producing under 'Doordarshan Classics' category. The cast was being finalized, locations were being decided and the music was being recorded before the start of actual shooting.

During this process, one day I went to the recording studios of Kuldeep Saproo, who was the Music Director of the Serial. I wanted some new, fresh and vibrant voices who would sing the songs in the Serial. Kuldeep had been on the lookout for such voices and had already auditioned a few in my absence. While we were discussing the probable singers, suddenly a young girl belonging to South Kashmir entered the studios along with another singer with whom





she was associated at that time. Kuldeep told me that she was quite popular for singing in marriage functions and other programmes along with the person who was accompanying her. She was attired in very ordinary and plain clothes and had an unkempt demeanor. Kuldeep had already heard her voice and thought that she would be a good choice for my Serial. He asked her to sing something. She had a good voice but I was still not so sure. Kuldeep had already recorded her and made me listen to the recording in her presence. When I heard the recording, I was mesmerized. So we recorded her for the Serial and the rest, as they say, is history. The songs that she sang for the Serial created a sensation and catapulted her to instant fame. She had a God gifted, naturally melodious voice. Her name was Shazia Bashir.

Later, in 2007, Shazia stole the show in the finals of 'Mile Sur', the Kashmir version of Indian Idol telecast on Srinagar Doordarshan, in presence of Shameem Azad, herself an ace singer and a household name in Kashmir, and



Bollywood actor Sanjay Khan. She did many recordings, live performances and also travelled abroad.

At the time of her recording for my Serial at Jammu, I had I suggested to her to learn music formally. She took my advice and subsequently formally learnt music from well-known musicians like Krishen Langoo, Waheed Jeelani, Munir Ahmad Mir and Qaiser Nizami, among others, who helped her in the initial years of her career.

The news that Shazia Bashir has been chosen to receive Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar-2015 makes me feel so proud of her. She has reached where she has because of her hard work and perseverance. She is the future of Kashmiri music and she has filled the space that was at one time occupied by the likes of Shameem Azad, Kailash Mehra and Rita Kaul. Shazia has a long journey ahead of her and I wish her 'Godspeed' for all her future endeavours.

Ayasharif@gmail.com

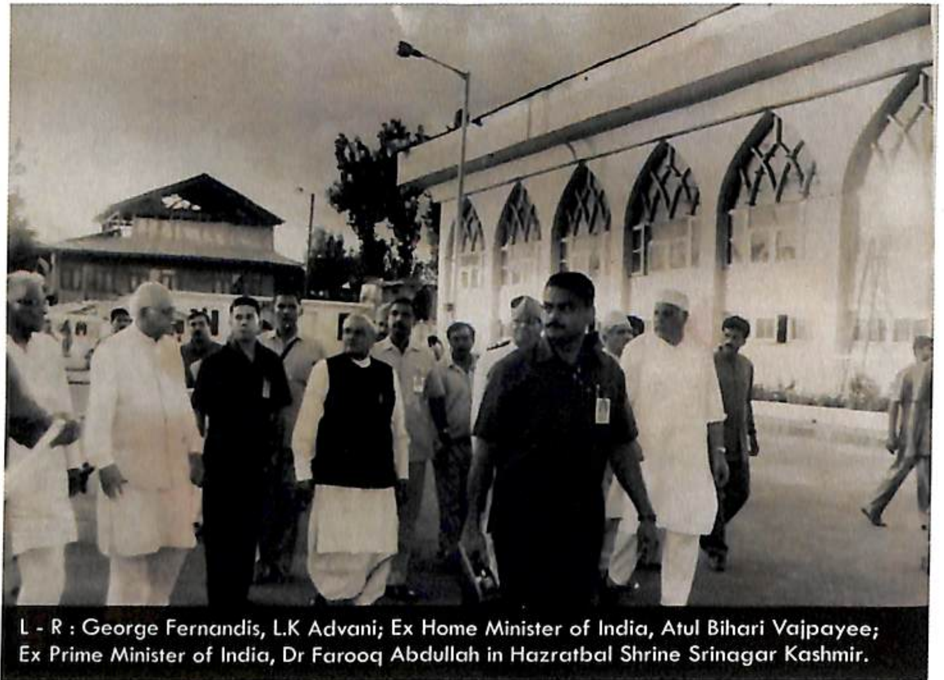




Muslims in the new era.

Dr. Shahnawz

Islam, with all its Paradigm is a definitive exploration and a path ,following which in thought and intellect the followers of Islam shall find the ways of uplift. Islam has in fact been made an religion instead of a faith because of the religious interruptions .When faith became religion, the Muslim world lost the headship hold. In its place such contemplation crept into the Muslim mind that had absolutely no connection with Islam. Early Muslim intellectuals were unaware of such a concept. The ways that they were introducing as Islam or religion they had not an iota of connection with thinking patterns of Muslim settings or reform in the system. All the endeavors of reform from Umar-bn-Abdul aziz upto khilafat-e-fatimiya (Fatimid Caliphate), they further added to the confusion of Muslim Ummah. And in fact set in motion the ugly process of further divisions and subdivisions. Establishment of the Caliphate was the basic reason of splitting up and disagreement in the Muslim Ummah. On its basis and the establishment Muslim's swords remained hostile towards each other for centuries together. After the death of the holy prophet, No historical document proves that the Prophet during his lifetime had given any specific direction about the establishment of Caliphate after his death. Entire Islamic history is silent about this.


L - R : George Fernandis, L.K Advani; Ex Home Minister of India, Atul Bihari Vajpayee; Ex Prime Minister of India, Dr Farooq Abdullah in Hazratbal Shrine Srinagar Kashmir.

There is no doubt that caliphate was the outcome of 'independent reasoning' of the companions of the prophet. But once the caliphate was established, it opened the doors of dissent for Muslims for centuries to come. This resulted in a situation of internal conflict that gave birth to conceptual doubts and everlasting tensions. And after this the creeping up of a state of internal confusion became a natural phenomenon. This induced the Muslim society to contemplate on a cerebral renaissance that in fact was the compulsive period of history. And this was absolutely something different from the Quran and the faith. Now the Muslims had folded the real spirit of Islam in the inception and handed over themselves to sword

fighting and suicides. This was totally different from the Quranic paradigm.

All those Islamic conceptual and social frames are non-Quranic, that are present in the Islamic world because of secondary interpretations .Quran is such an unparallel testament of God on which the entire human race has an equal right till the day of the last judgment. This holy book contains meaningful and emphatic discourses on aspects of enlightenment and seeking. Through this book God has addressed the humans. Finding a parallel to this in human contemplation is difficult. When it comes to interruptions, such theorists and intellectuals have always dominated who detached it completely from the message of God and the word of Prophet. And then the holy Quran that is the message of the God became subjugated to the interpretation. Quran was presented as a finding and a revolutionary movement but interruption made it a subject of human contemplation like Greek wisdom. In modern era Muslims need to read and understand Quran afresh. Quran needs to be made practical in personal life in this age of scientific temperament. We need to keep away from all those defections that have become the basis of tensions for the Muslim world and thought. The message that Quran gives to human races is that of Mercy and salvation. And the present day world is highly suitable for fructification of their meaning. Mercy and Salvation have deep meaning. If Muslim community understands them in the meaning of knowledge and discovery (Revelation), then once again the headship will be in the hands of Muslims. The world shall witness a great revolution.

Resorting to swords and suicides is the course of dejection and hopelessness. We shall have to understand the new world order. The challenges of 21st centaury are highly nerve testing and far reaching. In this age liberty and hegemony over other nations shall be possible through acquiring scientific knowledge. Quran had identified some 2500 years ago the discovery of skies, treasures beneath the earth, the wind power, the supremacy of justice, reform in societies as the basic subjects of reform in societies and nations. It is unfortunate that the entire period of Islamic history barring some two to three hundred years has been involved in sword fighting and jihad. These situations have given birth to such complicated problems whose resolution now seems impossible. The Muslim world now needs to shun all these confusions of thought. We need to lay the foundations of such a conceptual system that would be totally an outcome of divine society. We shall have to break the hackles of interpretational, explanatory and sectarian bearings and traditions and lay the foundations of such a new era that shall stand entirely and exclusively on Quran. Otherwise this conceptual complicacy shall create such a dreaded situation that shall lead to severe destruction.



Mufti Mohammad Syed; Ex Chief Minister J&K State & Membooba Mufti with Pakistani Delegation in Srinagar (India).

MUSIC IN SPHERE OF SUFISM

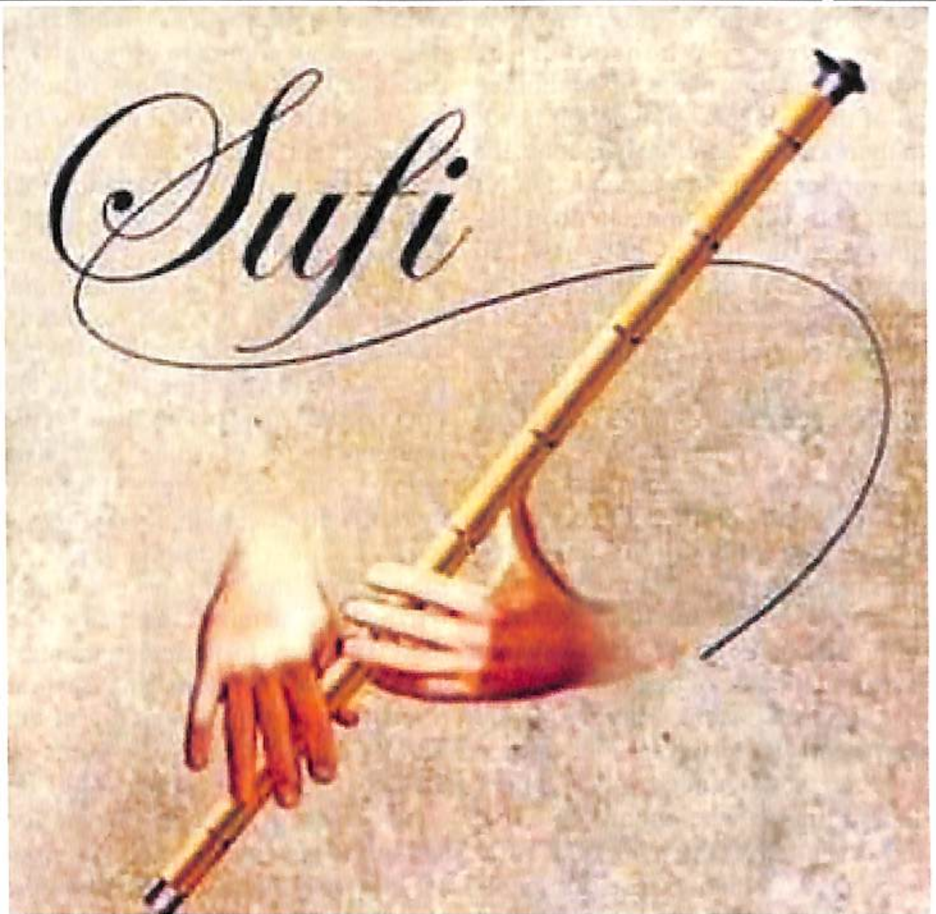


Mansura Haidar

The Sufism have played a significant role in the sphere of music which is said to be a "Divine art". It is surmised that the Divine Commandment which Moses heard on Mount Sinai "Muse Ke, Moses hark" and "revelation that came to him thus" was of tone and rhythm and he called it by the same name-music, and the words such as music and musike have come from that word. David, Orpheus, Sarasvati's veena all seem to suggest that "all kinds of harmony has its essence in music". The famous sufi, Rumi who called Love as the "astrolabe of heavenly mysteries" and the "eye salve which clears the spiritual eye and makes it clairvoyant" believed that "it is love that animates music and gives a meaning to life". With both its natural and magical charm "it isnot accidental that the term inbisat, (ecstasy) in Arabic and Persian



means both expansion and joy, or that the intensification of faith and spiritual experiences are interrelated following the language of the Quran, to the expansion of the breast (inshirahal sadr) (1). "The bats of the pulse and the heart, inhalation and exhalation of breath the work of rhythm the Breath, voice, words, sound all combined together seem to reflect a kind of inner ecstasy and heat in mystic dances of the whirling Cervishes. The inner vibrations are combined with the rhythmic movements of the whole mechanism of the entire physique. The Sufis are inspired by the Divinity who gives the elixir of life to all the Beauty in form, in line, in colour, in imagination, in sentiment, in manner and so on.



Sufis treated the cance and msic as a "prime popper". The cosmological philosophy that underlines the ceremonial ritual had the dictum that "life imitates art far more than art imitates life. "Similarly, the saying goes that "Every work of art is the child of its age" says Kardinsky "and in many cases the mother of our emotions." Unlike history, art, if repeated again, will at best be a "still born" as novelty alone seems to be its essence. Expression theory is said to have challenged the dominant mimetic theory of western aesthetics from time immemorial to 19th century because it was "soulless" art based solely on Greek Mimesis (imitation) a realistic art that is a representation of visual likeness. However, mystic music including Ilahis (mystic hymns) are an art apart" a rhythmic march to spiritual path" (2). The Indian ragas are sung and chanted from various sacred tradition and utilize breathing exercises and simple movements. In the shphere of mysticism and mystic culture also, the Turkish, Central Asian and Indian art of music and dance seem to join their hands together. The world renowned sufi Maulana Rumi had a "keen ear for melody and music"; in fact he was so sensitive on this score that even the rhythmic beats of a goldsmith's hammer made him burst into poetry and ecstasy. Gifted with such a temperament, it is no wonder that he instinctively selected words and metres which enhanced the beauty of his language. "- Love for Rumi is both a beginning and an end; it is the cure of all ills, a kind of mania which music helps to create and sublimate. The rupture and ecstasy caused by music enables man to have a glimpse of life and reality" (3). In music Rumi "found what he calls the Phantasy of Divine allocation, solace and composure." It was "no escape from the tribulations of his soul" but an "artistic and spiritual expression of the definite advance his personality had made by then". Similarly, the path of Rumi and Maulavi dervishes in Turkey, the Istanbul music and sama' groups including the ilahis (mystic hymns) and salawat (praises to Prophet), sohbat (spiritual discussions) Ruhani majalis (dialogues and conversational explorations leading to spiritual awareness) transcended the borders and found cross cultural trends and exclusive expression. It seems necessary to quote interesting comments of Thomas coryat who happened to see these sama' and raqs assemblies in 1613 in Turkey and sometimes condemned and sometimes appreciated its artistic and visual appeal. The whole passage is being reproduced here due to its significance:

"The whole company of them being settled in their places, and holding their Turkish manuscripts books in their hands, a certain singing man sitting apart in an upper room began to sing certain hymns but with the mostunpleasant and harsh notes that ever I heard, exceedingly differing from our Christian Church singing for the yelling and disorderly

squeaking of them did even grate mine ears. Whensoever he pronounced the name of Mahomet, all of them did cast down their heads to their knees. After he had done, the interpreter of the law ascended into a chair and read Mahometan doctrines but when he named him they fell prostrate upon their faces and kissed the ground.

Almost a quarter of an hour before he had done, three pipers sitting in the room began to play upon certain long pipes not unlike Tabors, which yielded a very ridiculous and foolish musicke, and contined so very neere a quarter of an hour after the clergy man had ended his lecture; and with them there played another, that struck with his hand a strange kind of instrument made of metal in the form of a kind of Bason. Having played very near quarter of an hour upon a sodaine they sounded much louder than ordinarie, whereupon some five and twentie of the two and fiftie Dervishes suddenly rose up bare-legged and barefooted and casting aside their upper garment some of them having their breasts all uncovered, they began by little and little to turn about the interpreter of the Law turning gently in the middlest of them all, afterwards they redoubled their force and turned with such incredible swiftness, that I could not chuse but admire it. Amongst the rest, there was one little boy of some twelve years of age, that turning in a corner of the room struck no small admiration in all the spectators that were strangers. This turning they kept for the space of one whole hour at the least, during which time, sometime they turned exceeding swiftly, sometime very gently. After they have half done, the singer in the upper room began to sing again at the pronounciation of some of whose words, the cervishes suddenly memdbled out certain strange terms with a most hideous kind of murmuring that did in a manner terrific and astonish us that were mere strangers to these ceremonies. This they did three or four several times with an acclamation of all the Turks that stood by. The forms of their dancig is as strange as the continuance of their swiftness, for sometime they stretch out their arms as far as they can in length, sometimes they contract them in a lesser compasse, sometimes they hold them about their heads, sometimes again they perform certain merry gestures, as if they were drawing a bow and shooting forth an arrow. Likewise some of them did contine turnig durig the hwole time in one and the selfe same place, and others more forward from one corner to another. This exercise now driving to an end, one of the cervishes beginnethy some prayer in Arabicke, and continually turning about with the rest of the company, pronounceth it with a very audible voice, and his Prayer being ended there is an upshot of this ridiculous and ethnic devotion for this time, after it had contined almost an hour and a half. The violence of their turnig is so great, that I have heard some of the have fallen down dead in their place through the extremities of their swift circumgyration, and whosoever is that doth so, is esteemed for a saint. Thiese feasts are like those Trietericall Orgia that were performed by the furious Myrmalores, the Priests of Bacchus, to the honour of their drunken God, upon the mountains of Citheron in Baeotia."

While discussing the aesthetic and spiritual side of the mystic music and dance (sama' and raqs), the controversy which surrounds these practices shouldnot be ignored. The two practices were considered by some as to be an "aid to the devotional aspect of Islamic ritual" a "kind of nourishment for heart and soul and a sort of guide to spiritual



salvation" and by others as a practice 'forbidden' in Islam.

Ibnul Jawzi (d. 1200) and Ibni Taimiyya (d. 1238) "disapproved of the practive" and "refuting the innovation in Islam", they emphasized in Risala fis-Sama' war-Raqs that "the Sama' of the pious people menas listening ot the verses of the Holy Quran only." The Sama' was classified by them into three broad and different categories, the lawful, the unlawful, the permissible. Abu Hanifa Thawri disliked it.

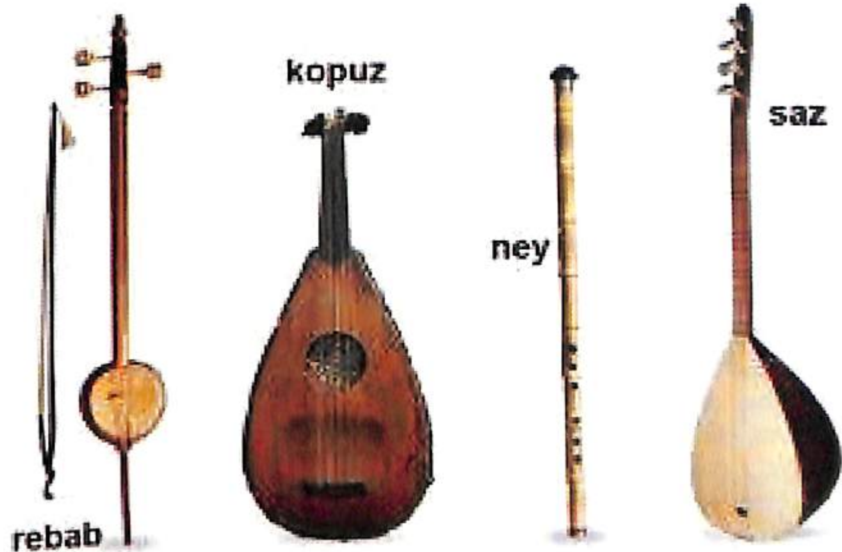
Al Maruf Karkhi did not listen tot hem. Shafii is of the view that initially "the Zindiqs irreligious perfons, first invented Taghbir (reading of peoms with harmony) at Baghdad to distract people from the Quran. These Zindiqs included men like Ibn-Rawandi (who considered Sama' as Wajib), Al Farabi, Ibn Sina and a number of toher such luminaries. If Siruajul Haq's evidence is to be believed, "Caliph Abu Bakr described music as Mazmur ash shaitan (flute of satan), when he saw his daughter Aisha listening to the song of two Ansari girls on ID festival. Propher is said to have uttered that "every community has its festival. Let them sing"

Imama Ghazali "Scientifically analysed the emotional side of human mind, encouraged the music and dance of the Derwishes which limits, and proved their legality by the help of the Quran and sunna. (7) in his Ihya ul ulumi din, Ghazali emphasizes that: "Sama' is a true touchstone for the heart and a living criterion. The breeze of sama' does not touch a heart except that it puts in motion whatever predominates it". Similarly dhul Nun comments "Spiritual music is a specific cure of all desires. Who hears it faithfully finds the way to God; who hears it to satisfy his sensual appetite turns a heretic" (8). It is also surmised that the" soul of man, before its descent inot his world has been hearing the celestial music of the heavenly spheres. For this reason, Sufis not only did not prohibit spiritual music and dance, but they deemed it necessary for moral rectification and liberation from material impurity. According to the version of these Sufis, the spiritual sama' liberates man from the attachment of matter and body. Thanks to the liberation of the soul and the attachment of union with god, they start to dance in remembrance of God" (9) and in spiritual exhilaration and the sufi is so 'absorbed' that he 'does not see anything except God'. Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi ahd discussed the importance of sama' and raqs in the twenth fifth chapter of his Awariful Ma'arif and observed that there are certain prerequisites for attending these sessions of the spiritual dance e.g. 'purity of intention , truthfulness, dignity and shunning vainglorious jest and carnal passions' (10). It seems to be "a herald from the invisible world::

"The whining of the pipe and the concussion of the drum,
Have a slight resemblance to that universal blow,
Therefore sages have said that these melodies
We have taken from the revolutions of spheres.
It is the resonance of the spheric revolution
That man produces in imitation by Tanbur and Vocal chords
Believers say that the bounties of paradise,
Have made sweet every ugly voice.
Therefore the nourishment of lovers is spiritual dance
Because in it there is the desire for union."

Like wise an echo of the same is heard in the observations of Rumi (who had been the innovator of a new style of sama' and raqs):

"Sama' is the comfort of the living spirits
Only hw who has the spirit of the spirit in him knows this
Only that person wants to get awakened
Who is asleep in the beautiful garden
But as to him who is sleeping in the prison,
Hw would be at a loss to wake up,
Make a spiritual dance only when there is a wedding,
Not where there is a woe, sorrow and bemoaning,
He who has not seen his spiritual substance,
He from whom the shining moon is hidden,
How would such a person merit the audition of sama,
Because sama' is only for the Union



of the Beloved,
Those who have their faces oriented towards Kaaba,
That is their sama' in this world and the next,
Specially a circle of Sufis who are in sama,
They revolved in a circle while the Kaaba, is in their very midst.

The Indian music and ragas too are permeated with religious devotion and are sung and chanted from various sacred tradition and utilize breathe exercises and simple movements. In the sphere of mysticism and mystic culture also, the Turkish, Central Asian and Indian art of muysic and dance seem to join their hads together. In his Nuskhai Khayalati Khusrau, the famous Amir Khausrau had given a detailed description of this intermixing of India-Central and West Asian muysical notes. According to him, the real art of music (ilmi mausiqi) amounts to Shash awaza, duwazda maqamat, twenty four shoba, forty eight gosha, seventy bahri usul which have already been stated. Besides, theire are one hundred and forty five pardahs. The Indian musicians have three karam, seven swars, fourteen muarrikhha, six rags, thirty six ragini, thirty pavitra, nine mantras, nine raginis, seventy two sankirn Bhed, sixty three alankars, one hundred and eight tal, eight thousand rag, eight thousand ragini, three lakhs seventy thousand nine hundred and thirty tans. Although the maqamat of Farsi and Indian Rags, do not have in relity such a consonance and synonymity, the maqam of Iraq has some connection with raga Bhairawi; the Shobai mukhalif has some closeness with Ramkali; it is entitled as Bhas. In Asrari faraz Purabi, malwa, asar, ahang and saugand giri appears. From Kandahar, Iraq and mukhalif, if combined together with malkus and puraba. The sazi Nauroz in Dukhaba lalit becomes one voice with the Nishpur. Lahaqi Husaini with naudi Jaunpuri dugahand gushai



Ajam with naudi mausuf-maqami zangula and some shobas can be mixed together."

The spell of music continues and dominates the religious and cultural sphere. There were Hazrat Inayat Khan and Pandit Pran Nath. Even today there are "the dances of universal peace which are a powerful and joyous form of interfaith group meditation and prayer.

These dances promote peace and



healing by focusing on what deeply unites us once source, one essence. Amongst its luminaries are Sheikh Tahir Ansari, Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan and Pir-O-Murshid Samuel Lewis, Murshida Juha Khadija, Jeanne Ayesha Lauenborg are some of the well known names in the field. There are "timeless treasures aweakening humanity to our true calling as beloved of God". The sufi poets Jalaluddin Rumia nd Hafiz followed by several others in the succeeding generations have pursued the work with the same fervor until now. The folk lore and sufi music of Iran coupled with the Kurdish, Turkish and Lurish traditions found a good expression in Amir Alam Vahab's Soroosh ensemble created only recently in 1981.

Similarities are noticed between the traditional instruments like nay (reed flute), Tanbur (three stringed long necked lute), Chogur (eight stringed log neck lute), daf (urge frame drum), barbat (eight century lute with a fretless short neck) and tombak (goblet drum), surnai, Kurnai, dhol, nagara and others which formed the basis of sufi and other musical ensembles of Central Asia.

Apart from the various specialized treatises compiled on the art of music and dance written in India and central asia, there are nice paintings depicting court, sufi, temple or even street dancing and singing. The treaties written by Jami, Kaukabi and others throw light on the art. Similar terminology is indicative of close contacts in the sphere of music and dance e.g. maqamat, amad etc. the interest in Idian music is very well expressed by modern writers int heir works (e.g. E.M. Alkon of Valadivastok on the meaning of shruti, Svarmandala, dipta, ayata, karuna, Mridu, madhyam, samgan. Similarities have ben noticed in Abhinav Gupta's Natya Shastra and Jami and Kaukabi's treatises and Amir Khusro's role in adaptations in the costumes and Ras, Bibhav and Jahr are examples in question. It is interesting to note that "the sacred dance from Mexico Danza de concheres a tradition derived from the Nahuatt-Toltec culture and those performed by the Cittaltonac community (those who follow the path of the stars) are a form of meditation in movement that celebrates the magnificence of all creation." Khusrau had particularly brought out the varied aspects of this commingling. In the art orf music, he had excelled and had attained mastery both over Irani and Hindi usuls. He is said to have discovered the Muqami Nayak in musical sciences. Interested and proficiendt in the art since his childhood and possessing a melodious voice, "there used to be a rage because of Khusrau in the gatherings of sama;". Due to his vast study and rich experience" he is said to have invented ahangs (khud ahanghai sakhta buda ast) supposed to be a maestro of Indian music and inventor of many a new specimen like Kehmukarnis, Chaubolas, Do sukhna etc." in his "Nuskhai Khayalati Khusrau" the varied talents of Khusrau are best reflected through his own words. His following comments on the innovations in music exhibit his expertise on music:

"Chun itebai amr matai wajibo lazim ast lajurm

Az ushri ashiri an ibni hech daran raqam zada kilki

Ija mi gardanad ki dar peshgahi khatir qawwalani

Farsi hihad. Asli ilmi mousiqi shash awaza

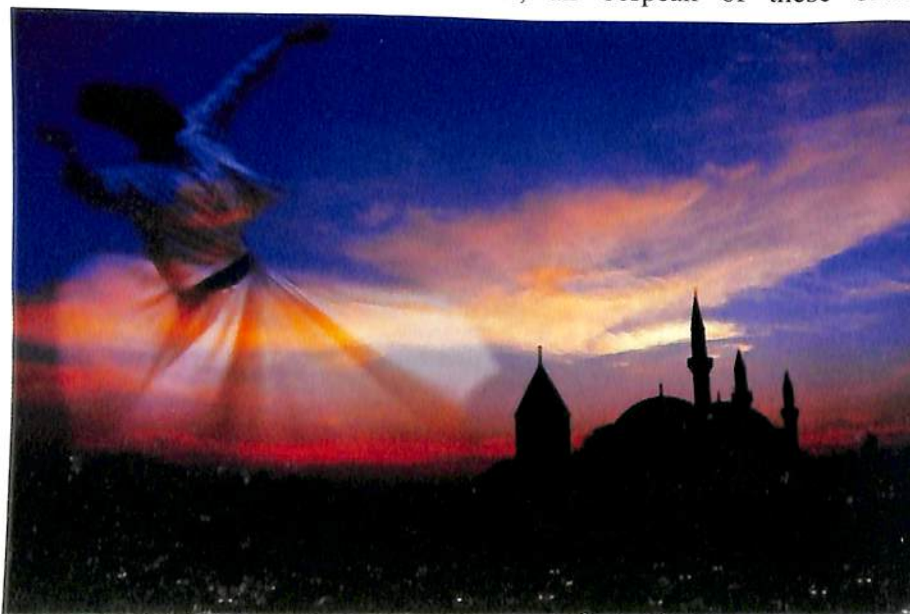
Dwazdah muqam ast o chahar shoba;



chehlo hasht gosha wa hafdih bahri usul ki mujammil azan
Darin daira tahrir yaft o siwai an yak sado chehl
Panj pardah ast. Ghanan I Hindi sah karam o haft
Swar o chahardah ragini, shash rag si o shash
Ragini wa sih potro huh mantra o nuh ragini,
Haftado sankim bhed, shast o sih Alankar, yak
Sado hasht tal, jumla hasht hazar rag o hasht
Hazar ragini, sih lac haf dih hazar o nuh sado sih
Taan ast. Agarche muqamati farsi wa raga hai
Hindi waqei muafaqat name ayad anche asari az
Imtizaji muqamat wa raga hai mazkur baaqli
Naqis mashhud gashta far surati tahrir mi
Numayad. Ba muqami Iraq ra ba ragi Bhairon
Nisbati wa shobai mukhlif ra Ram kali munasbati
Wa maqlub ba bhas dar israr wa az purobi wa
Malwa wa Asar o Ahang saugand firi mi ayad. Az
Kandahar I Iraq o Mukhalif ki yaki basar ayand
Ba Malkus o Purba mi shawand o saz I Nauroz dar
Dukhada bal alit hamawazi nishapur nihadand.
Lahiqi husaini ba nawadi Janunpuri maluf dugah
O sholii goshai ajam ba nawdi mausaf muqami
Zanfula wa shobai chand gah ki makhlut kardan".



Music and dance performed an important sphere in which brisk exchanges have taken place. The Sama' and Jahr, the dance of whirling dervishes the dwazdah and shash maqam, the Indo khwarazmian tunes etc., all bespeak of these brisk exchanges.



The connection between the art of music and the teachings of tasawwuf has, therefore an aesthetic basis with hundreds of expressions and gear, for example, the tarana which was introduced during the period of Sassanids by Barbat and Nakisa (entitled as Tronik) became a routine part of method of composition (sukhan rani) and awaz khani. From 12th-14th centuries, tarana became the third qism of the chain of Nubaxoi classical music mainly in Samarqand and later in Heart and becomes famous and extremely popular. Tarana held. Significant position even in the "musiqi-i-Irfani" in the words of Brigel that "Tarana speaks of ain (regulations) of path of love".

Although in ghujdwani's opinion, the Sufis were not expected exxentially to shun or avoid sama' but the middle course was necessary as over indulgence was like ly to have a bad effect. Abdur Rahman Jami's view that Khwaja Bahauddin laid much emphasis on Khalwat dar anjuman (being outwardly busy in worldly acts, but inwardly meditating on God) and were abstain preferably from seclusion, zikri jail and sama'.

The dwazda maqams of music (the twelve stations of music) started

almost simultaneously with the dwazdah usuli maarifat-i-sufiana and came into vogue at the same time. The researches of O.Akimushkin had warned that until the time of beginning of ilmo-amaliyat of tasawwuf is determined with precision, the conclusions can be no means be final.

In music, the shash maqam is in line with one of the basic and fundamental principles of tasawwuf and its ahang o zarbaha with a common terminology (mustalihat mushtaraka) (e.g. Makom, rah, perhrav, suvara, parda, tarji, mushkilat sarband khona, khat, daromad, furoward, auj, saqinoma, akhbor, sarakhbor, salik and do on). Ibni Khardadbeh had also described other special ahang known as "asbros", "Khurshitroc" and others.

Varied kinds of Ras or rah are described, (e.g. Rahi Mawaraunnahri, Rahi Khusrovani, Roh Jan, Rohi Qalandari, Rohi Khwarazmi, Rahi Fazdiddin Aqa, Rahi sadir Khan, rohi Aqasharif, Rahi Masufkhwacha, Rohi Odina Hashim. The fact that the term "Rah" was in older days known as "Ras" tempts one to presume that it was the Hindu "Ras". The term roh is explained in the lughat "Mirat ul Ushshaq" in the following words : Roh "maratib-i-tanazzul ra goyad dar kausi taraqqi" (the stages of degeneration during the process of progress). Rah denotes "harakat" a continuous movement. Sahib had presented his argument in the following manner.

"Mashau ghafil zi gardidan ki ruzi dar kadam bashad;
Hamin awaza mioyad zi sauqi asiya berun"

(one should not be stagnant as the livelihood lies in moving. The same voice is heard from the frinding stone outside.)

Maruf Abul Mafakhir Yahya Bakharzi (14 C.) had emphasized in his Risalai tasawwuf that "there may be different routes but the objective is one thorugh diverse (turuq or sohha) ways maqams and saliks. Thus the best method is to take any route which is ahead of you and to be an alim to the same stock till you discover the way". In the teachings



of tasawwuf the 'naqis' way for any "kamil" was bad as he was seeker of "maqamat I sair" which indicates the different steps. Jalauddin balkhi also refers to this sairi manavi.

"Man bas Kuna mamma tu ai mutribi raushandil, az zer chu sair aai, bar zamzami bamizan" (The great saint (arifi buzurg) turns towards the singer and invites him to travel between high and low strids like the high and low tunes and search of the path to the Ultimate Reality. Hafiz Shirazi ahd very clearly brought out the connection between music and istilah-i-rah "mutribo parda begarda o bezan rahi Iraq; ke badin roh beshud yar o zi ma yod nakard".

The word parda gardanidan refers to switching over or turning of one maqam to another maqam in that very ahang and in that very situation adopts the Roh to Iraq. This flows into what Ibni Sina writes "harkat ba janibi parda hai bala dar batini shunawanda ihsasati ghazab wa shiddat ra ba mal mi arand va baraks, maili ahang janibe parda hai barn ba kas ehsasi mulaimati va itoat kari at amino maid" i.e. "The harakat or upward movement towarda higher and higher parda has created terrible and intense inner head and an upsurge of emotions in the heart of a listener. As against this is the ahang wich turns towards the pards hai barn a feeling of softness and submission becomes apparent. The harakati haft zina (or pardah) is recommended both in Mantiqatut tair and in Fariduddin Attar's Haft Badi that an Arif must cross these stages to reach the ultimate "zinai hashtum" (eight step). Attar had allocated seven flowing marhalas namely "ishq, Marifat istighna, tauhid, Khairat, Fuqr, fana. The necessity of harakat (movement) in Sufism had been emphasized by Ahmad Tusi in the following words "known that movement is essential and stationing or staying at one place causes damage" the movement averts the harm. The harakat or a man's movement is of seven kinds: harkat-i-hawas (emotions and feelings), harkat-i-nafas, harkat-iqalb, harkat-i-akl, harkat-i-ruh, harkat-i-sirr (fana wa baqa), harkat-i-jauhari insaani.

The Sahib-i-zauq (seekers and hankerers) reveive all these movements during the sama' and these can be perceived, similarly the restless and ruffled ups and downs and high and low beats of music create a kind of inner heat and acute desire in a man to come into motion and circulation. Thus the sama brings a kind of harkat-batini wa zahiri i.e. both inward heat and moton and outward movement. "The difference between harkat-i-ajsam-i-falaki and its realativity with the harmony of pardas of music is not possibly workable because it involves subjects of varied types. However, the language of the art of music is similar to hat of terminology of Sufism namely roh, gardish, peshrav, tarj I bazgasht, gardana, all these have the same concept of harakat in both. This istelah goes into the surudaha and sazindaha of the music of Bukhara and Tajikistan.

Undoubtedly, therefore, there is some close conection between the meaning of Roh-i-ahangha (rah nawakhtan) and roh dar tasawwuf. The harkat of the varied beats of musical instruments are like the movement of salik (seeker of Sufism). It has clearly been specified in the Risalai naghmai Ushshaq that "know in the sama' there are three main stages (makam, awwal fahm, anzah wajd, ongah harkat) first understanding second ecstsy and third movemtn." The harakat (circulation) or Rahpaimai alone can lead the listener of sama' to wajd.

In his Al lamai fi tasawwuf, Sarraji Tusi ahd described seven maqams namely tauba, wara, zuhd, fuqr, sabr, tawakkul and riza, yet one of the preconditions was that the salik should be well-versed and posses various kinds of knowledge. Ahmad Danish emphasizes "The ashiq should be a sagacious and knowledgeable man well acquainted with all kinds of learning, sciences and arts and crafts particularly he should have command over art of music, story, history, painting, art of inscribing. (16) The golden mien "-maslaki mutavassit (rohi miyona baid az chap o rast)" was also recommended for the benefits of mind and soul.

Interestingly, the Avesta had reference to one city of Pur and Sadai musiqi (Vocalists misic). This place of music is known as "garodmana". (17) The view presented by Saifuddin Umrawi' in his kanzultahf that the shahri mausiqi came to an end with the following bait (couplet) needs reconsideration:

Sazad, ki ruzo shab andar dwazdah paradah
Dad eh zaban cho gul-ipsausani sana goem

Out of the twelve pardahs namely rost, ushashaq, navo, busalik, Husaini, Rahavi, zangula, Iraq, hijaz, Isfahan, buzurg, mukhlif, only the first one (i.e. rost) was given the first rank as it had continued from the time of Hazrat Adam.

In the teaching of tasawwuf, there is this typical method of unity of duet competition (uslubi ittihadi, juftahai mutaqabila). For example, the maqams like Ushshaq, Mukhalif, buzurg, kuchak, hejaz, Isfahan, Iraq, Ajam. The music of every kind gives pleasure and solace to the mind and soul. Hakim Aflatoon had described this fact: "When a person dances in ecstasy, he gradually moves away from the worldly weals and woes. Consequently, this feeling of joy percolates in his inner self and gently, happy and kind feeling started appearing". A great change dawns upon the listener of the music. His world of ideas transforms and the feelings of rancor, anger and sorrow are replaced by pure, composed, cheerful and ecstatic self. However, such effect is possible only when the music of the Sama' is useful (mufid) and correct (sahih). The real sama' creates an inner ecstasy, feelings of love, goodness, righteousness, and awakening of depth of heart abnd inner heat. Imam Ghazali had commented:

"God's secret lies in the harmony of proper musical notes with spiritual effect. Some musical sounds create happiness, others produce a kind of melancholy; some lull one to sleep, others raise emotions of ecstasty. Certain notes stimulate acton and physical movements particularly in the hands, feet and head. The spring season seems to start and the vocal and instrumentsl music both carry such an impact that even a child in his cradle starts showing its tickling



effect".

Similarly Abulmafakhir Yahya Bukhari (XIVC) explains this impact in the following manner: "it is said that each part of the body during sama', reacts each man absorbing its effect in his own peculiar way." A mixed and varying impact is noticed. Sometimes a person cried, laments, again beats his hands and dances. Often the people lose senses and fall unconscious. During the sama', tears well up and start trickling as the heat of the sama' has its effect on the coolness of the faith and belief melting it. In certain cases the sama' alights into heart and engulfs the entire self, to an extent that even the tears dry and can no longer be shed. Then the impact f this sama' could be seen over the entire physique of a person as the body becomes ruffled, sometimes the sama' leaves an impact on inner self spiritually and there seems to be a complete whirlpool inside a person". The sufi ideas contained n the poems of Hafiz Jami and others create a kind of internal tempest spiritual ups and downs. The lahni wajd or bazyaft i.e. the sweetness and effect of the songs creates such an inner heat that not only the body but the soul also starts dancing.

The art of music was considered to be one fo the fair ingredients of learning of Riaziat (mathematics), the other three being arithmetic, geometry and astronomy). The realationship of qirat (i.e. the recitation of Quran) with the musical expression had no less significance be it tartil, tajwid or any other form. One of the basic principles of Tasawwuf was nazaryayi daryaftii maarifat tawassuti shunidan (i.e. the idea of attaining the gnosis through listening). In this respect, one could come across men like Barbad, Marwazi, Rudaki, Khusru, and others. It is strange that all the Qari khanas in the environs of Caliphate had this resonance of sama' and "Tarfain-i-fail" (one listener, another vocalist) for a one man sama is not possible unless there are two (yake goyanda and digre shuninda).

Each royal court has its own group of musicians. The custom of Majlise Khas (special assemblies) majlise tarab (pleasure assemblies) of Transoxiana and the royal nudma's nashist in the darbars were as lively as the one's depicted in the illustrations of Bahram o Khusru and in the sessions of the Dastan sarai (story telling), Sher khwani (recitations of poems) etc.

In the sufiana kalam, one comes across the words like saqi, bada, tauba shikastan, kashka kashidan etc. called as saqi nama in the shash maqam and happen to be one of the most delicate and effective form of sufi music (nadir tarin padidahai badi) which is rare and unique in its expression and is famous for being based on the most deep and philosophical thinking. Numerous ahangs like suwari, ghina or rakoban Hubab, etc. and rare sahifas like "Tazinawa". The saqi namas of Jami, Hafiz and other poets of Khumriyat are full of such verses. In his Sharaf nama, nizami categorically refers to the saqi, worob, mast, kharab and kharaba.

"beya saqi an arghwani shrab,
'ba man deh, k eta mast gardam kharab,
Magar zan kharabe nawai zanam,
Kharabatiyaon ra sadoi zanam"

(Bring the red wine, O cup bearer and give it to me so that I get intoxicated and become devastated.
Yet in this bad place, I will raise a song and call all the persons from this nest.)

The repeated references to wine and saqi, the classical khumriyat/saqi namas) are also part of sufi poems and music. Although the drinking of wone is said to be a fabrication, it is by all means allegorical and is considered to be lefally halal in miloli mutaqaddema, Ahmad Tusi, a twelfth century sufi had described this combination and its other concomitants. He says "The round daf (daera-i-daf) indicates various organs of body and the skin. The beating of daf presents the revelations from God (Waridat-i-Ilahi) which arises from the depth of inner heart and engulfs a man. The chalachile daf (panch zangula chahar girdi daf) i.e. the five chalachils of the daf around the daf, indicate the level of maratibi mulikkiyat, maratibi walayat, maratibi insaniyat, maratibi Ruhiyyat thorugh the connection of which maratibi hasti (life itself) is attained.



Growth of Opera in Kashmir

Dina Nath Nadim

The history of performing theatre in Kashmir is quite a recent one and that of a regular Kashmiri theatre in the modern sense can be hardly traced beyond the twenties of the twentieth century. But any attempt made to assess the growth of theatrical arts in Kashmir would remain incomplete if it failed to delve deeper into the past and draw plausible inferences from any direct and indirect allusions to these arts as they existed in the ancient history and tradition of the Valley. So far as the historical evidence is concerned one has to accept that it is rather scanty excepting for some references here and there in Kalhan's Rajtarangini and the writings of Kshemendra---particularly his Lok Prakash or Kuttani Malla. But as regards the evidence from tradition or folklore a lot of material, which would throw sufficient light on these arts as they were then practised, awaits interpretation.

Today when I am called upon to talk to you regarding the growth of Kashmiri drama in general and opera in particular, you would permit me to make a casual sally into the past so that we could rediscover from the past what is not distinctly clear to us at present. I admit that such a sally could at best be based on conjecture or surmise, but



Opera Bomber te Yemberzal presented by the Govt Girls College M.A Road Srinagar, before the Ex Prime Minister of USSR on his visit to Kashmir, the main role played by Prof Miss Zia Durani.

with the help of these loose threads a picture, even though a hazy one could become discernible.

In Kalhan's Rajtarangini you will find a number of references to dancers who won acclaim from the Kings and the people for their exceptional talents in depicting the human emotions through the medium of their art. One of the last Hindu kings Harshdev is said to have been a great patron of dance and drama. Even the dancers, who belonged to the laity, were raised to the positions of eminent courtiers by him. Mention again could be made of the temple dancers, who like anywhere else in the country, maintained a very great standard of their art. After reading the treatises on the poetics, aesthetics and literary criticism of great masters like Kshemendra, Mammata, Anandvardhan and Abhinavgupta one can safely deduce that dance could not have been an isolated

phenomenon of cultural life but must have been an intrinsic ingredient of dance-drama which narrated the story of kings and deities. The extraordinary genius, with which the superstructure of Rasa is raised over Bharat's Natya Shastra and allied theories pertaining to aesthetics, leave no doubt in our minds that dance and drama must have attained the same heights as of poetry.

So far as a positive reference to drama goes, it appears in Rajtarangini of Jona Raja and Shrivara, where we find Zaina Vilas and Zaina Charith mentioned categorically as the plays written and staged then. It will be interesting to note that even before we had Zaina Charith, we find another Kashmiri genius, the great Bilhana writing his memorable Vikrama Charitha, perhaps on the pattern of Bana's Harsha Charitha. And in our quite recent literary history we have again Prakash Ram's Lav Kosh Charitha and Parmanand's Sodama Charitha in the same line. What is, however, important about Zaina Vilas and Zaina Charitha is that they are the very first Kashmiri dramas which are mentioned in the history. Unfortunately the manuscripts of both have not been found.

The next reference to the Kashmiri play that was staged during that period is that of Banaswara Vadh which luckily is available today. It has already been transcribed into the present-day Kashmiri script by Shri Amin Kamil, according to whom it is a full-fledged opera with the Chhand---the tune---for each separate song given in the text. Thus we can build a factual history of Kashmiri drama from this period.



Gh Ahmad Mehjoor, Gh Mohd Sadiq; Ex Chief Minister J&K State, Dina Nath Nadim in 1952.

This much of the ancient historical evidence is sufficient for the scope of the present talk. Let me now make a venture to interpret what is extant in our tradition and folklore. So far as our folk dance forms of today are concerned the only popular one is the Rof, which has usually been referred to by those who wrote about our folk culture. This form, no doubt, is very much in vogue, perhaps because of its racy tunes marking the highest pitch of our very popular Chakkri. Although Rof is mainly danced by women on festive occasions or by boy-danseuses in Bachcha Nagma, it is clearly an off-shoot of Chakkri

which is a form of collective singing of both men and women. It is, therefore, evident that Rof must have been a dance form of collective folk jubilation in the days when singing and dancing was not taboo. Besides Rof, there are some other forms of folk dances which have not so far been mentioned anywhere. The most important is Damaeli, which is a deteriorated form of collective folk dancing that has lost most of the cadence of step and lilt of music. Danced to the accompaniment of Nagharadrum, and suranaishehnai, it is in vogue in the backward caste of Watals only. You will permit me here a little digression to talk about these Watals and their love for music and dance, as it has some bearing on this talk today. The Watals constitute a sub-caste who pursue the profession of sweepers, scavengers and cobblers. They are mentioned as low caste sub-castes in the Rajtarangini as well. Together with Dooms they have originally devised our drum, Watal Nagara, our Sarang, the Watal Sarang and our dance Watal Damaeli. Even in our present times our danseuses and musicians hailed mostly from this sub-caste. These danseuses are called Naag Koor which means a Nag girl. Strangely enough, Nagirai is also revealed in the story as Nagi Watul. I wonder if these people are not the descendants of the aboriginal Nagas of Kashmir, whom the Aryans, when they came to Kashmir, treated as out-castes, and who later migrated to Himalayan Terai, Nepal and NEFA. Interestingly enough, the people in East Bengal and borders of NEFA have a dance similar to our Dambaeli and they call it Damail. Yet another lesser known dance form is the Weegi-Nachun, which is common among the Kashmiri Pandit women folk who dance round the bridal circle after the bride leaves for her husband's home. The song, to the tune of which Weegi-Nachun is danced, is usually benedictory, but the interesting aspect of the dance is that the Chhand used is the same that prominently recurs in Banasura Vadh in the lyrics woven into the tale. The other two dances of benedictory type are the Sidda Guru and the Bhandha-tchok. While the former is an 'after the marriage' dance, blessing the groom and the bride, the latter forms the prologue to the folk opera-cum-ballet popularly known as the traditional Bhanda Paether. And here I come to the real folk theatre as it exists at present in our countryside. The Bhand Paether appears to be of a very ancient origin because of the many terms associated with it. The Bhands popularly known as Bhagats in some areas have probably been attached to the place of worship in that area. At least this is positively true of the Akingam Bhagats where the institution and performance were solely dedicated to the local deity. The terms Magun for Mahaguni, Dirga Sutar (Ladi Shah) for Dirgha Sutradhar who narrated the tale, mukhot for the mask, etc. testify to the ancient history of Bhands. The repertoire of these Bhands includes Raaza Pather, Darza Paether, Gosani Paether, Shikargah Paether, Bakerwal Paether and many more. Almost all the Paethers are dramatised anecdotes which must have been very popular as the performance always lampooned the oppressive bureaucracy. The burlesque has, however, degenerated into vulgar dialogue and ribaldry and it is only through the bold endeavours of the Akingam Bhagat now that this ancient folk drama is being revived in its originally chaste form. What concerns my topic today is the fact that all the Paethers are intrinsically folk-operas which have lost their musical chores but are even today played to the accompaniment of Surnai. The orchestral squad is known as Kanils meaning 'pipers'. With this background of a popular folk opera, we can be able to assess the epic poems, Ramayana, Shiv Lagna, Sodama Charith, Radha Swayamwara, Gulrez, Akanandun,


Opera Naki Badi staged by Students Hindu High School in Polo Ground During festival of Kashmir

and Heemal. All these narrative poems are interspersed with songs and dialogues in verses and can be safely reckoned as operas in the tradition of both Banasura Vadh and Bhanda Jashan. It would be interesting to note that Parmanand and Krishan Dass used to dance in costumes when they recited Radha Swayamvara and Shiv Lagna. This kind of performance was called Tseth and provided the link between Jashan and Raas. The story of the evolution of stage drama, as it came to Kashmir in the beginning of the 20th century, begins with the seasonal visits of the Raas Mandalis from UP and Punjab who performed in any available open space in a locality. These mandalis would begin their performance in the traditional style of Krishan Lila and ended with the cheap ghazals in a vulgar way. As in Bacha Naghma, here also the boy-actresses played the female role and the performances would usually end in hooliganism because of the two vying sections among the audience/listeners. As against the Ras Lilas, the Ram Leelas were very popular, and through the patronage of Dogra rulers attained a large measure of artistic perfection. The two parties who performed Ram Lilas were the Punjabis and Bohras. Both vied with each other in achieving excellence.

Now we come to the advent of drama played on the stage. Here also the beginning was made by the ruler, Maharaja Pratap Singh, who patronized the first dramatic club, known as Amateur Dramatic Club. The stage was erected at Basant Bagh and the then famous plays, Bilwamangal, Veer Balak, Chandravati and Mahabharat were staged there. The doyens of the theatrical movement then included Ram Krishna, Jeevan Nath Mattoo and later on Shri Chet Ram Chopra. Soon after, another batch of young men created Saraswati Dramatic Club where Mahabharat, Krishan Sudama, Safed Khoon, Khoobsoorat Bala, Khwab-i-Hasti and many more were staged. The female role, as usual, was played by boys. The plays were either of Agha Hashar or of Narayan Prasad Betab and would be performed for the whole nights. The pattern of the plays was that of a Shakespearean play and could be classed as verse plays with songs in between. The music of these dramas was composed by a talented artist Master Hari Vilas. The metrical prose dialogues were declaimed rather than spoken as dialogues. The Swaraswati Club was followed by National Dramatic Club and Kashmir Dramatic Club. The last performance Patni Pratap was staged by Kashmir Dramatic Club and the female role was played by ladies for the first time.


Opera Directed by M.L. Kemmu in 1964-65.

It was, however, in 1928 that the first Kashmiri play Satech Kahwat was staged. The play dealt with the theme of self-ssacrifice of Harishchandra for Truth. This play followed the pattern of the Urdu plays already mentioned and could be classed as a verse-play in a way akin to the opera style. The young men who performed in this play could not carry on for long as they became traditional Raas Kath or Raas boys, a nickname which all the theatre workers earned for themselves then. Since that pioneer Shivji Purbi started performing Raas and Ram Leela in Kashmiri style in the second decade of the twentieth century, the social taboo associated with the dramatic activity spelled its own death knell rather than the advent of the cinema, as is often argued.

It was, however, in the early forties that two Kashmiri plays Grees Sund Ghara was written by Mohi-ud-Din Hajini and Bata Har was written by Prem Nath Pardesi. Neither of them could be staged. But soon after 1947, with the great cultural upsurge unleashed by the success of the freedom struggle, the dramatic activities were revived. The Cultural Front, which became Cultural Congress, started writing and staging Kashmiri plays regularly for some time. And both on the stage and in the open air, these plays were witnessed

by thousands of people.

It was in these crucial years of a cultural renaissance that an attempt was made at the insistence of Dhanwantri to integrate some of the virile dance forms like Bhangra of Jammu with those of Kashmiri forms. Besides, a conscious effort was made to lend such content to plays which could depict the life, and voice the aspirations of the people. Consequently, a ballet sort of Bhangra titled Land to the Tiller was composed by me in 1949 and staged with success.

It was, however, in our quest for a suitable form in line with our legacy of lyrics and popular taste that Bombur ta Yemberzal, the first opera in the real sense of the word, was composed and staged a number of times in the state. In this opera the whole music was systematically composed on folk tunes and orchestrated properly. The story of the opera is based on a folk saying that the bumblebee and the narcissus, though in love with each other, never meet in life. Another opera Rava Rupee was composed in 1955 by Shri Amin Kamil but was not staged. Then in 1956 Heemal Naigrai was composed by Roshan and myself and was staged. Yet another opera Neki Badi was composed and staged that very year. The other four operas composed by me since then are Meghdoot, based on Kalidasa's famous poem, Shihil Kul, based on the theme of National Integration, Safar ta Shehjaar and Vyeth. Of these four, only one, viz. Shihil Kul was staged and the other three were broadcast from Radio Kashmir, Srinagar. Yet another opera Gulrez, based on the famous masnavi of the same name by Maqbool Shah Kralwari, has been composed by Shri G R Santosh and broadcast from the Radio Kashmir, Srinagar. Excepting Heemal Naigrai and Gulrez, all the rest are based on symbolic technique with the Kashmir landscape serving as a live dimension to the themes.



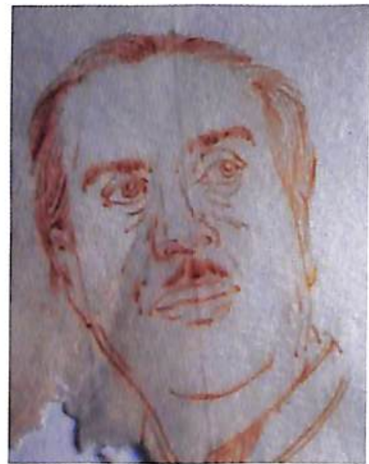
Gulafroz in Vatasta.

The characters are drawn from among the flowers, the song-birds, the breezes, the trees, the rivers, and the lakes of the valley. The beauty of the landscape together with the lilt of the haunting folk tunes and the cadence of soft Rof style steps, have to some measure justified the choice of this form of drama, as the one which on the one hand is rooted in traditional folk style and on the other guarantees a progressive growth of this particular art in the valley.

With the new experiments in theatre art on modern lines conducted by many amateur clubs under the patronage of the State Cultural Academy on the one hand and the revival of Bhand Theatrical Movement on the other, a sustained effort at opera composition and production is bound to complete the triangle so emphatically needed for the growth and development of Kashmiri drama today.

In 1975 Dina Nath Nadim gave me a typed copy of the paper Growth of Opera in Kashmir. It was published in a monthly journal The Cultural Digest, edited by Rattan Razdan and me. I am posting it here for the benefit of the literati. Arvind Gigoo

Dina Nath Nadim



D.N Nadim

Bhe Gavne Aaz (Kashmiri)
Today I will not Sing

Original by D.N Nadim
Translated by Trilokinath Raina

I will not sing today
I will not sing
Of roses and of bulbuls
Or irises and hyacinths
I will not sing
Those drunken and ravishing
Dulcet and sleepy-eyed songs
No more such songs for me!
I will not sing those songs today.
Dust clouds of war have robbed the iris of her hue
The bulbul lies silenced by the thunderous roar of guns
Chains are all a-jingle in the haunts of hyacinths
A haze has blinded lightning's eyes
hill and mountain lie crouched in fear
And black death
Holds all cloud tops in its embrace.
I will not sing today
For the wily warmonger with loins girt
Lies in ambush for my land.
I will not sing today
I will not sing
Of Nishat and of Shalamar
Of poppy beds and waterfalls Soft
And silk-smooth melodies
Of the green dew.
I will not sing today
For the determined scorcher
Lies in hiding everywhere
Waiting for a chance to blight
whatever is in bloom.
Roses hold their breath in fear
The poppy nurses her stain
The stream's song
The koel's plaint
Have dried up in their hearts
And the wild mynah is tone-tied with fear.
I will not sing today
For the wily warmonger with loins girt
Lies in ambush for my land.

I will not sing today
I will not sing
Of the yearning of first love and the blossoms of young spring
For the autumn wind, poison fanged, is in hot pursuit of spring
The hot cry of fire is heard in every

forest.
Man has, alas, turned hunter of man!
Behold the poor narcissus with
unkempt hair
The Jessamine torn from the
disconsolate vine
The wind prostrate.
I will not sing today
For the wily warmonger with loins
girt
Lies in ambush for my land.

I will not sing today
I will not sing
Of the tiller in the rice fields
Following his plough, sowing,
weeding
Transplanting
A song bathed in the sweat of toil
For the poison weeds have sapped
earth's vitality
Locust swarms are swooping down
on ripe corn
The weeat on every brow lies frozen
with fear
The whirlpool is dancing the Devil's
dance
The grass has withered and is
bleeding at the roots.
I will not sing today
For the wily warmonger with loins
girt
Lies in ambush for my land.

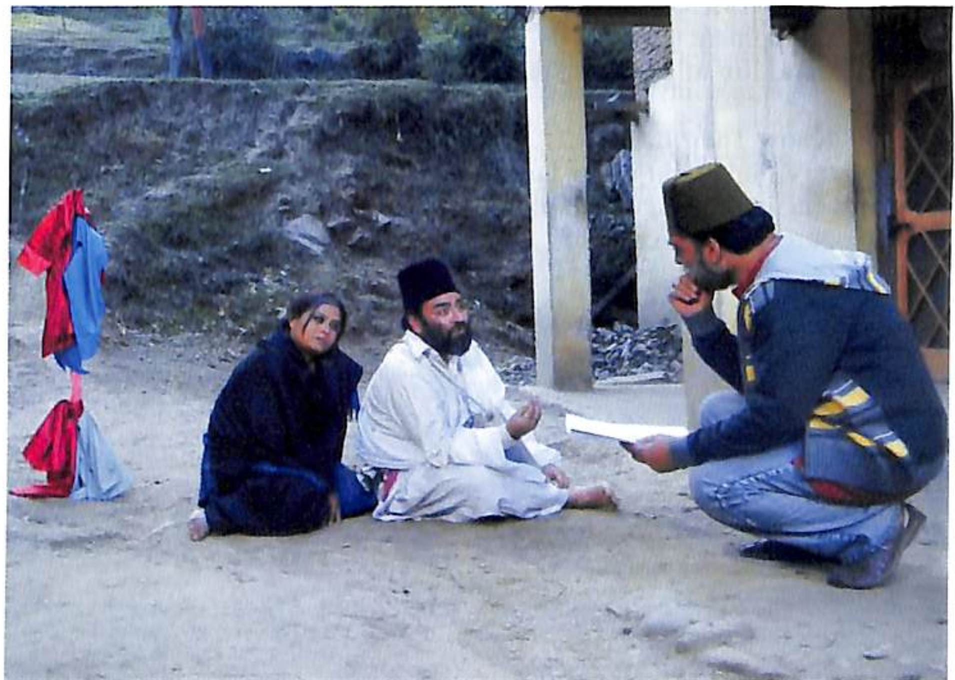
I will not sing today
I will not sing
Until
Hill and mountain
Field and fallow
Bud and blossom
Red rice and white
The koel's song
Spring and fall
Garden's woods, rivulets, streams
Jessamines, roses, poppies
Cataracts and Shalamar with all the
dower of spring
Zojila and Burzal and the sky-kissing
Nanga
Sheshanag and Vaavajan
Until all these I see again
Freed from fear, siege and terror
And at the earlies break of dawn
Fulfillment greets my hopes
Until my darling motherland smiles
Like vernal bloom or innocence
In freedom and in joy.
And then I will sing
Drunk with the scent of spring
But never till such time those dulcet
tunes for me!
But today I will go forth
Not heeding any dangers
With a sharp pen and a sharper
sword.
I will stall bandits
With pen and hammer and sickle
And a dauntless resolve.
I will roam everywhere and face
every danger
With pen and hammer and sickle.
With sweat from every pore
I will wash my garden dear
And I will fill with light
Every gorge and pit and chasm.
I will go forth
With pen and hammer and sickle
And a dauntless resolve.

Profile Faiyaz Dilbar



Writer / Director

Name: Faiyaz Dilbar
Born :(1957) Srinagar Kashmir India
Address: 323-D, Shipra Sun City, IndraPuram,Ghaziabad U.P.India. 201014.
(M):91- 9811922521
E mail: faiyazdilbar@gmail.com



Working as a filmmaker , producer, director, writer and journalist for past thirty years in the field of television and filmmaking. Faiyaz Dilbar is also an eminent poet and fiction writer in Kashmiri and Urdu languages. His Published works includes highly acclaimed Kashmiri poetic collection "Harnis Tapas Andhar" and other Literary works in all most all the leading magazines of J & K and other parts. Forthcoming book in Kashmiri is collection of my fiction works titled "PakaanDhoor-e-Falak" and " Kashir e Theatrich Teareekh"(History of Kashmiri Theatre) Delhi Based Faiyaz Dilbar have also worked in print media for about five years in Kashmir.

- Assistant editor, Srinagar Times, Srinagar for two years.
- Editor, weekly Dehkan, Srinagar for one year.

Chief Editor, Kashmir News Bureau (KNB) Srinagar a local news-feeding agency for two years.

Recent Film & Television Assignments:

- "AzizanBai" 13 Episode serial (fiction based on the life of great freedom fighter of 1857) for DD Urdu Writer /Director/Producer
- "Rabtaay" 13 Episode serial (fiction) for DD Kashir Writer/Director/Producer
- Worked on a project with NGEN (NDTV GENPACT joint venture) for a 150 episode Tele-Serial.

Other Works:

- Produced and directed several documentary films for reputed International Organizations like, European Commission, International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) Geneva, Aga Khan Foundation and others.
- Written an 18 episode

family soap opera in Urdu, "RishtayNatay" for D.D.Kashir. (In house production of DD; Telecasted thrice so for)

- Written an 18 episode Kashmiri serial "Baal Meareyoo" for DDKashir; in house production.

Films and TV programs (written, Produced & Directed)

- "Re- Union" Story and screenplay of feature film in Kashmiri for Debonair films Srinagar. (Under Production)
- "Moot Court Competition 2007" a film for International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) about National level competition on International Humanitarian law.
- "Mewat… The Entity" documentary film for Aga Khan Foundation and Society for All Round Development (SARD) on Socio Cultural life of Meo Muslims of India.
- "Know Their Land" documentary film about waste lands development and management of water resources, for Society for Waste lands Development (SPWD) New Delhi. Screened at Environment & wildlife film festival "Vatavaran" in New Delhi.
- " Mind Your Steps" film on the problem of landmines in India,

for International Committee of Red Cross, film was specially screened on 27th september2007at India Habitat Centre New- Delhi on the occasion of commemorative conference to celebrate 10 years Ottawa Mine ban treaty.

- "NaevUfaqNaevShafaq" A non- fiction five episode series in Kashmiri for DD Kashir.

"Shan-e-Watan" A travelogue in docu-drama format for DD Kashir.

"Guldasta Eadk Saffar Nama" for DD Urdu.

"The True Jehad" a short film about MoulanaWahidudin Khan and his teachings regarding concepts of peace, tolerance and



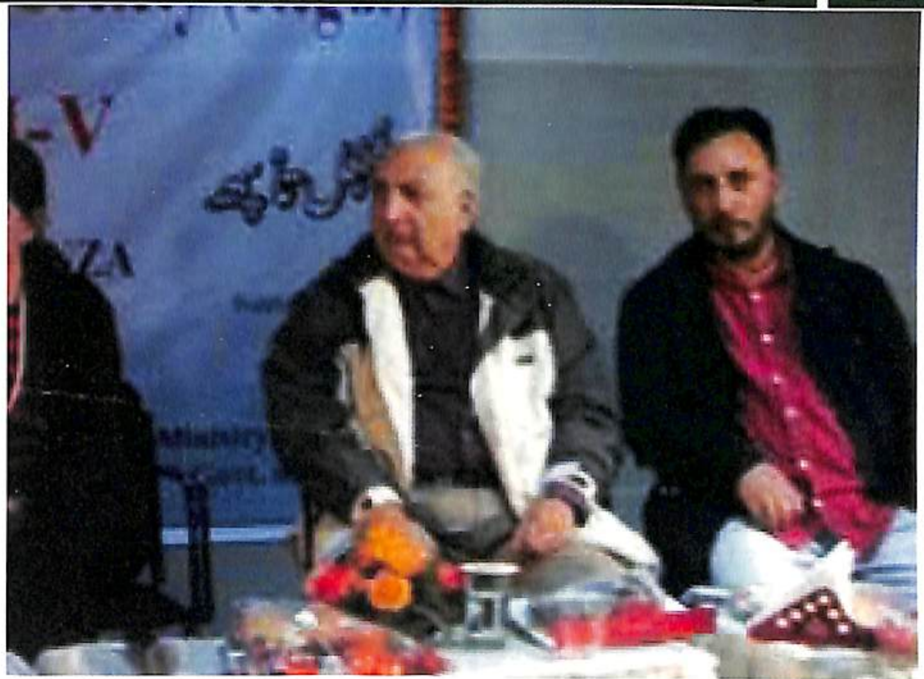
non-violence in Islam.

Screenplay & Dialogues

- 39 episodes tele-serial titled "Bandhan" of 30 minutes each episode. (Telecast on DDI, DD International,DD Bharti, DD World, DDK Srinagar, DD India & DD Kashir "Bandhan" is among few tele serials produced in the country which figures in the prestigious catalogue of selected serials and tele films & magazine Doordarshan the essence of India published by Prasar BhartiBroadcasting Corporation of India, (for Debonair Film & Video Communications)
- 60 minute duration Tele film "TanhaTanha" (telecast



repeatedly during Prime time on DD-1, DD-Metro, DD-International, DD India, DD Bharti. The Film is among few films produced in the country which figures in the prestigious catalogue of selected serials and tele films & magazine Doordarshan the essence of India published by PBBCI of India. The film has been preserved in DD archives. (for Balaz Films & Advertising)



□ 60 Minute duration tele-film "Lakeerien" (Telecast repeatedly during prime time on DD-1, DD-Metro, DD International, and DD-Bharti. The film has been preserved in DD archives. (for Debonair Film & Video Communications)

□ " PuranaGhar " one of the films from Hans ChristianAndersen "Ki Kahaniyian " was screened in Ist International Film Festival held at Srinagar in 2007 organized by Films Division , Ministry of Information and Broadcasting , Govt. of India. (for Debonair Film & Video Communications)

□ " SoneKaKhazana " one of the films from "HansChristian Andersen Ki Kahaniyian " was screened at 15thKolkatta Film Festival. (for Debonair Film & Video Communications)

Past Assignments

(1989-1991): Worked as correspondent for;



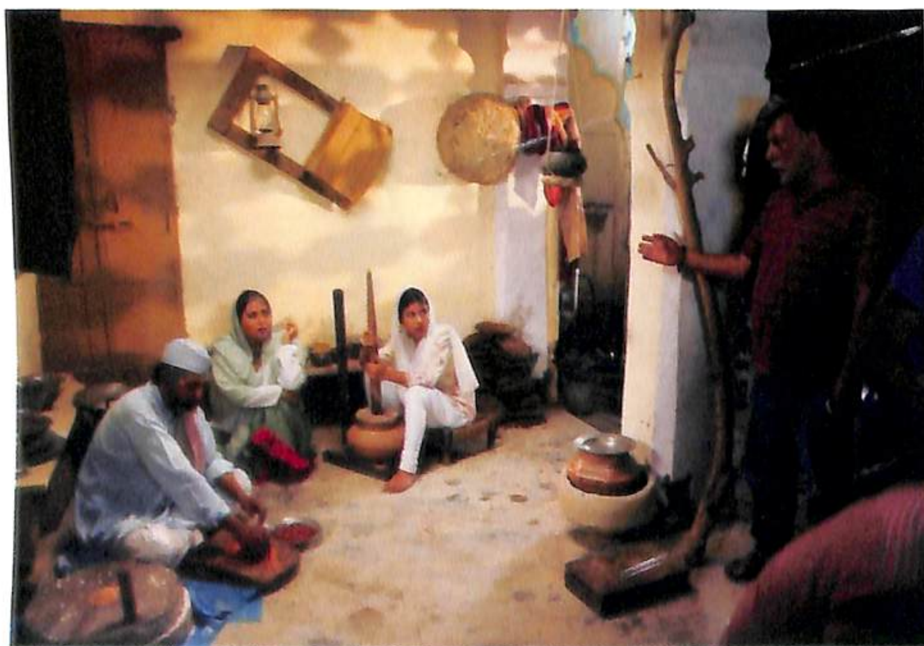
- Communication Group, New Delhi
- Hindustan Times Television, New Delhi
- Observer News Channel, New Delhi (1992 -93)
- Produced and Directed short film "Shiksha" for Bodh ShikshaSamiti (NGO) Alwar Rajasthan.
- Produced and directed two films for Society for All Round Development (SARD) Delhi based NGO.

Directed Couple of films for;

- Cine India International Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi
- Independent Television Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi
- Collage Communications, New Delhi

(1994-95)

- Worked as Associate Director for Business Series"BhaheKhatta" (13 episodes) for DD-1
- Assistant Director for documentary film "Colors of History" for MaharanaMewar Foundation Udipur.
- Produced and Directed "Living Legends" a 30 minutes documentary film on Drokpa tribe of Ladakh sponsored by J&K Government, Department of Tourism.
- "News Watch" Weekly series on DD-metro (150 episodes) as correspondent.
- Worked as first Assistant Director for an Australian Film Production Company- Micro Nite on a commercial(ad film) for Cadbury England on 16mmFormat
- As Correspondent for weekly TV show "Heads and Tails" on wildlife and animal rights, hosted by Maneeka Gandhi for DD metro.
- As Correspondent for " India The Awakening" A daily series on India's 50 years of independence ,Produced by PritishNanndy Communications Mumbai for DD National.
- Directed Two short films(1) " Making of Bagat Singh" (2) " What led to Jallian Walla Bagh" for GirishKarnad's "SwrajNama"DD.
- Directed two short series for Malaysian Television on Muslim festivalsEid and Ramdhan.
- As correspondent for "Koshish" a series for Doordarshan on philanthropists.
- As location Director for a film on former Prime Minister Shri AtalBihari Vajpayee for DD. (1999-200)
- Directed a series on Animal Diseases and Home Remedies for the Ministry of Social Welfare.
- Location Director for two short films of Malaysian Television about Mughal Period in India.



Folk Tale

Why the Fish Laughed

Narrated By Waseem Dar

There is a certain fisherwoman passed by a palace crying her fish, the queen appeared at one of the windows and beckoned her to come near and show what she had. At that moment a very big fish jumped about in the bottom of the basket.

Why the fish laughed

"Is it a he or a she?" inquired the queen. "I wish to purchase a she fish."

On hearing this the fish laughed aloud.

"It's a he," replied the fisherwoman, and proceeded on her rounds.

The queen returned to her room in a great rage; and on coming to see her in the evening, the king noticed that something had disturbed her.

"Are you indisposed?" he said.

"No; but I am very much annoyed at the strange behaviour of a fish. A woman brought me one to-day, and on my inquiring whether it was a male or female, the fish laughed most rudely."

"A fish laugh! Impossible! You must be dreaming."

"I am not a fool. I speak of what I have seen with my own eyes and have heard with my own ears."

"Passing strange! Be it so. I will inquire concerning it."

On the morrow the king repeated to his vizier what his wife had told him, and bade him investigate the matter, and be ready with a satisfactory answer within six months, on pain of death. The vizier promised to do his best, though he felt almost certain of failure. For five months he laboured

indefatigably to find a reason for the laughter of the fish. He sought everywhere and from every one. The wise and learned, and they who were skilled in magic and in all manner of trickery, were consulted. Nobody, however, could explain the matter; and so he returned broken-hearted to his house, and began to arrange his affairs in prospect of certain death, for he had had sufficient experience of the king to know that His Majesty would not go back from his threat. Amongst other things, he advised his son to travel for a time, until the king's anger should have somewhat cooled.

The young fellow, who was both clever and handsome, started off whithersoever Kismat might lead him. He had been gone some days, when he fell in with an old farmer, who also was on a journey to a certain village. Finding the old man very pleasant, he asked him if he might accompany him, professing to be on a visit to the same place. The old farmer agreed, and they walked along together. The day was hot, and the way was long and weary.

"Don't you think it would be pleasanter if you and I sometimes gave one another a lift?" said the youth.

"What a fool the man is!" thought the old farmer.

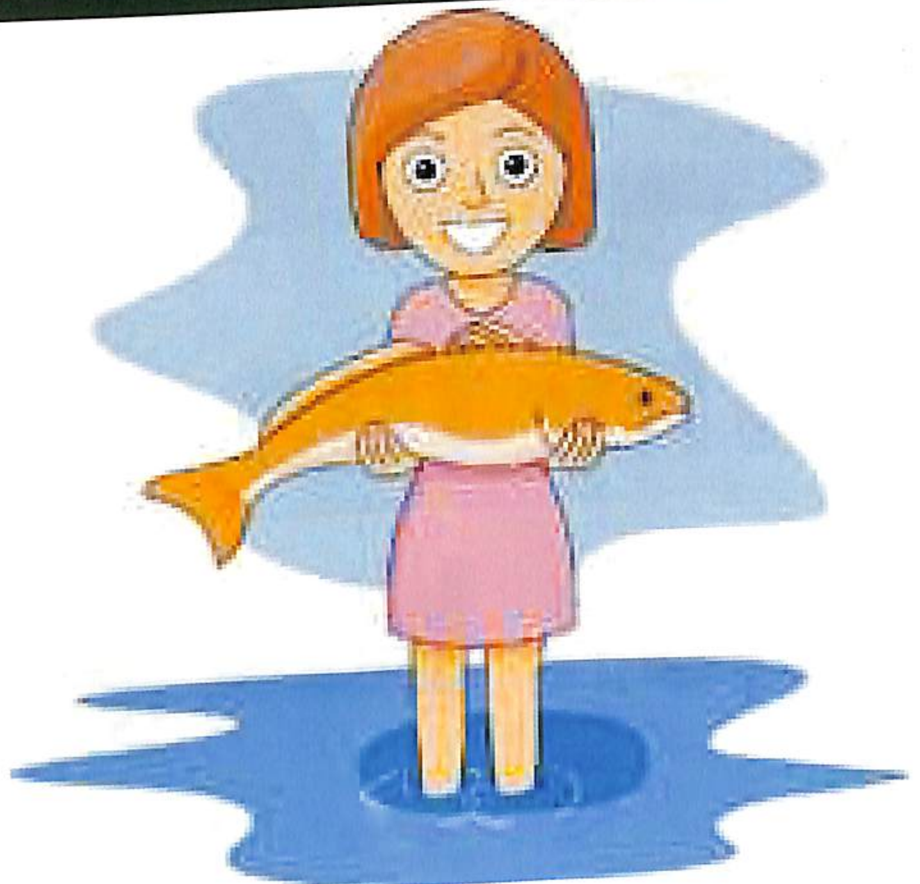
Presently they passed through a field of corn ready for the sickle, and looking like a sea of gold as it waved to and fro in the breeze.

"Is this eaten or not?" said the young man.

Not understanding his meaning, the old man replied, "I don't know."

After a little while the two travellers arrived at a big village, where the young man gave his companion a clasp-knife, and said, "Take this, friend, and get two horses with it; but mind and bring it back, for it is very precious."

The old man, looking half amused and half angry, pushed back the knife, muttering something to the effect that his friend was either a fool himself or else trying to play the fool with him. The young man pretended not to notice his reply, and remained almost silent till they reached the city, a short distance outside which was the old farmer's house. They walked about the bazaar and went to the mosque, but nobody saluted them or invited



Folk Tales

them to come in and rest.

"What a large cemetery!" exclaimed the young man.

"What does the man mean," thought the old farmer, "calling this largely populated city a cemetery?"

On leaving the city their way led through a cemetery where a few people were praying beside a grave and distributing chapatis and kulchas to passers-by, in the name of their beloved dead. They beckoned to the two travellers and gave them as much as they would.

"What a splendid city this is!" said the young man.

"Now, the man must surely be demented!" thought the old farmer. "I wonder what he will do next? He will be calling the land water, and the water land; and be speaking of light where there is darkness and of darkness when it is light." However, he kept his thoughts to himself.

Presently they had to wade through a stream that ran along the edge of the cemetery. The water was rather deep, so the old farmer took off his shoes and paijamas and crossed over; but the young man waded through it with his shoes and paijamas on.

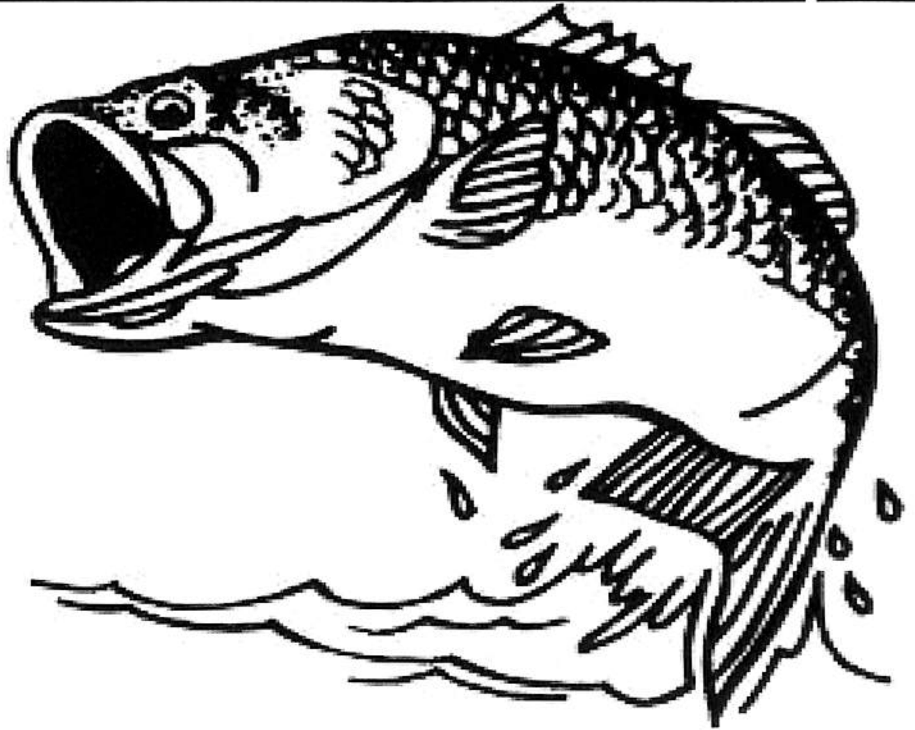
"Well! I never did see such a perfect fool, both in word and in deed," said the old man to himself.

However, he liked the fellow; and thinking that he would amuse his wife and daughter, he invited him to come and stay at his house as long as he had occasion to remain in the village.

"Thank you very much," the young man replied; "but let me first inquire, if you please, whether the beam of your house is strong."

The old farmer left him in despair, and entered his house laughing.

"There is a man in yonder field," he said, after returning their greetings. "He has come the greater part of the way with me, and I wanted him to



put up here as long as he had to stay in this village. But the fellow is such a fool that I cannot make anything out of him. He wants to know if the beam of this house is all right. The man must be mad!" and saying this, he burst into a fit of laughter.

"Father," said the farmer's daughter, who was a very sharp and wise girl, "this man, whosoever he is, is no fool, as you deem him. He only wishes to know if you can afford to entertain him."

"Oh! of course," replied the farmer. "I see. Well perhaps you can help me to solve some of his other mysteries. While we were walking together he asked whether he should carry me or I should carry him, as he thought that would be a pleasanter mode of proceeding."

"Most assuredly," said the girl. "He meant that one of you should tell a story to beguile the time."

"Oh yes. Well, we were passing through a corn-field, when he asked me whether it was eaten or not."

"And didn't you know the meaning of this, father? He simply wished to know if the man was in debt or not; because, if the owner of the field was in debt, then the produce of the field was as good as eaten to him; that is, it would have to go to his creditors."

"Yes, yes, yes; of course! Then, on entering a certain village, he bade me take his clasp knife and get two horses with it, and bring back the knife again to him."

"Are not two stout sticks as good as two horses for helping one along on the road? He only asked you to cut a couple of sticks and be careful not to lose his knife."

"I see," said the farmer. "While we were walking over the city we did not see anybody that we knew, and not a soul gave us a scrap of anything to eat, till we were passing the cemetery; but there some people called to us and put into our hands some chapatis and kulchas; so my companion called the city a cemetery, and the cemetery a city."

"This also is to be understood, father, if one thinks of the city as the place where everything is to be obtained, and of inhospitable people as worse than the dead. The

city, though crowded with people, was as if dead, as far as you were concerned; while, in the cemetery, which is crowded with the dead, you were saluted by kind friends and provided with bread."

"True, true!" said the astonished farmer. "Then, just now, when we were crossing the stream, he waded through it without taking off his shoes and paijamas."

"I admire his wisdom," replied the girl. "I have often thought how stupid people were to venture into that swiftly flowing stream and over those sharp stones with bare feet. The slightest stumble and they would fall, and be wetted from head to foot. This friend of yours is a most wise man. I should like to see him and speak to him."

"Very well," said the farmer; "I will go and find him, and bring him in."

"Tell him, father that our beams are strong enough, and then he will come in. I'll send on ahead a present to the man, to show him that we can afford to have him for our guest."

Accordingly she called a servant and sent him to the young man with a present of a basin of ghee, twelve chapatis, and a jar of milk, and the following message:—"O friend, the moon is full; twelve months make a year, and the sea is overflowing with water."

Half-way the bearer of this present and message met his little son, who, seeing what was in the basket, begged his father to give him some of the food. His father foolishly complied. Presently he saw the young man, and gave him the rest of the present and the message.

"Give your mistress my salam," he replied, "and tell her that the moon is new, and that I can only find eleven months in the year, and the sea is by no means full."

Not understanding the meaning of these words, the servant repeated them word for word, as he had heard them, to his mistress; and thus his theft was discovered, and he was severely punished. After a little while the young man appeared with the old farmer. Great attention was shown to him, and he was treated in every way as if he were the son of a great man, although his humble host knew nothing of his origin. At length he told them everything—about the laughing of the fish, his father's threatened execution, and his own banishment—and asked their advice as to what he should do.



"The laughing of the fish," said the girl, "which seems to have been the cause of all this trouble, indicates that there is a man in the palace who is plotting against the king's life."

"Joy, joy!" exclaimed the vizier's son. "There is yet time for me to return and save my father from an ignominious and unjust death, and the king from danger."

The following day he hastened back to his own country, taking with him the farmer's daughter. Immediately on arrival he ran to the palace and informed his father of what he had heard. The poor vizier, now almost dead from the expectation of death, was at once carried to the king, to whom he repeated the news that his son had just brought.

"Never!" said the king.

"But it must be so, Your Majesty," replied the vizier; "and in order to prove the truth of what I have heard, I pray you to call together all the maids in your palace, and order them to jump over a pit, which must be dug. We'll soon find out whether there is any man there."

The king had the pit dug, and commanded all the maids belonging to the palace to try to jump it. All of them tried, but only one succeeded. That one was found to be a man!!

Thus was the queen satisfied, and the faithful old vizier saved.

Afterwards, as soon as could be, the vizier's son married the old farmer's daughter; and a most happy marriage it was.

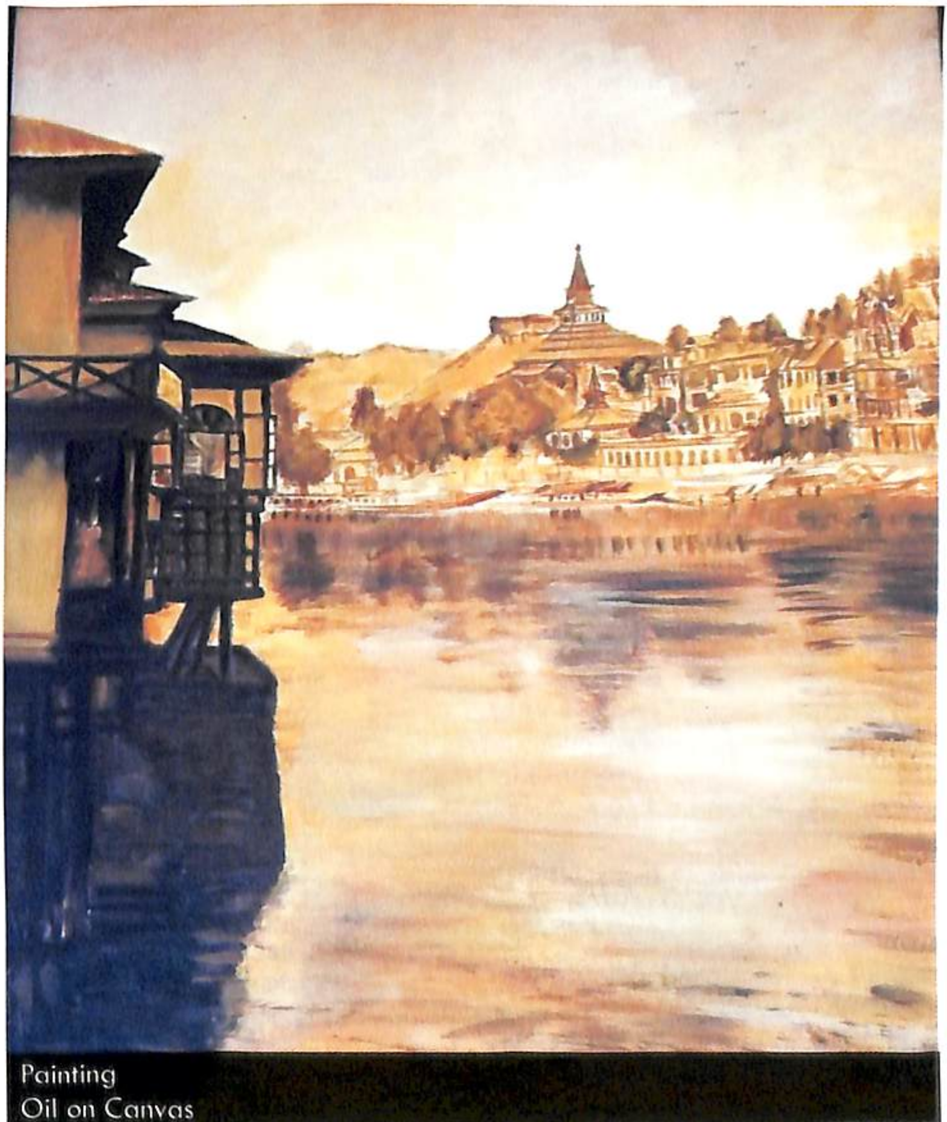
Jatinder Kour- A Hope in Painting Art



(Jang S. Verman)

From the early times of human activity, man has been involved in various expressive activities giving ample oportunities to observe, simulate, express and explore further possibilities in mustering creative abilities. This has paved a path in the development of art being recognized as a fine way of expression, so known as fine arts.

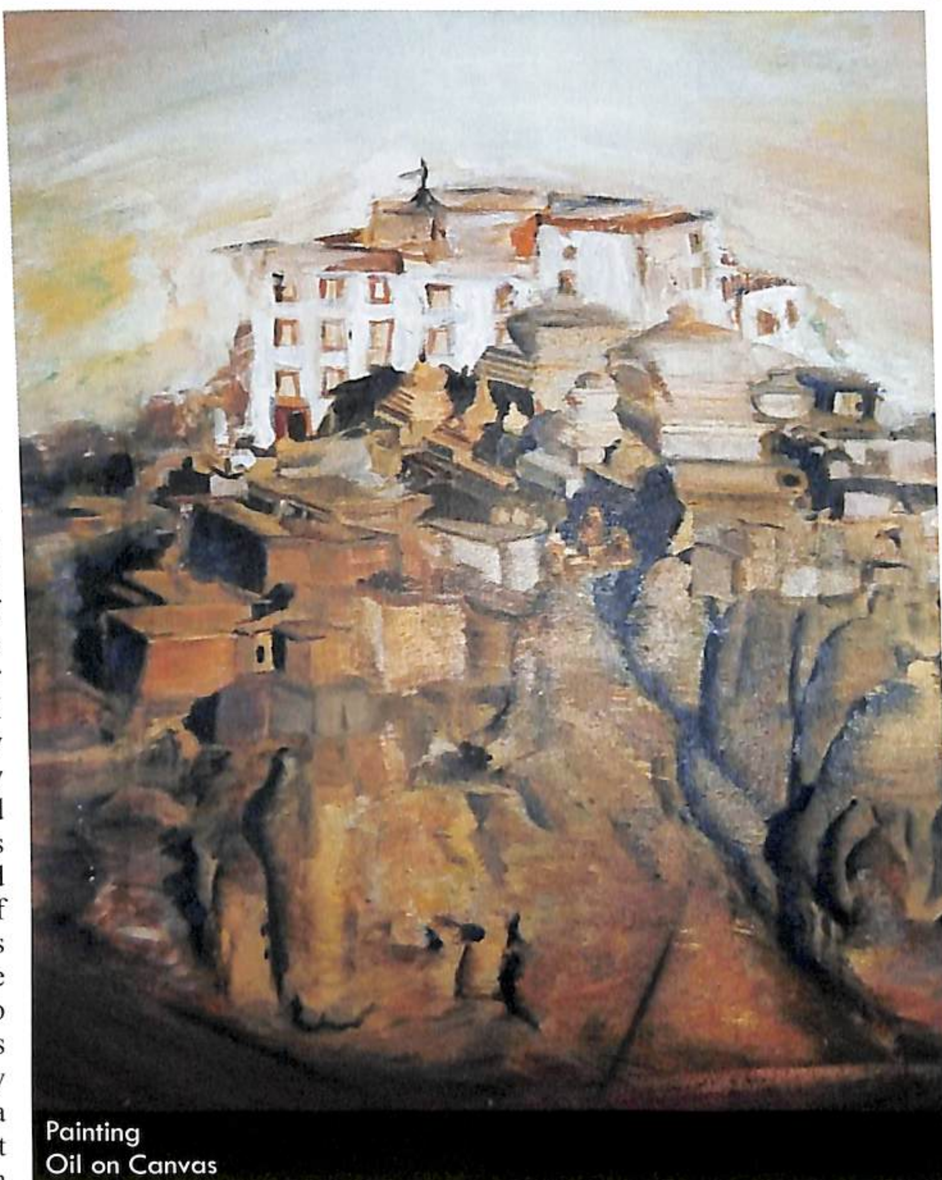
The art is considered to belong to three of its basic forms viz.- Literary, Perfoming and Visual art forms. The terms are self explannatory. Whereas literary art forms deal with all works dealing with letters- written or spoken; perfoming art forms deal with the performance of a creative activity on the spot and visual arts deal wioth the expressive work which could be visually seen in one or othe form... Painting being a strongest visual expression out of all. Jatinder Kour, a Jammu based upcoming artist addopted the art form of Painting. From her childhood she intended to go for painting but could not pursue it as her parents wanted her to go for medical classes. By the end of education that all proved not to be a successful experiment . ultimately she did her Graduatin in Emglish leaving her exclusive choice of Self-taught



Painting
Oil on Canvas

Painterher interest i.e. art based education. However her inner instinct kept her craving for the fulfil her apptitude in art. She started at her own to practce sketching and later painting. Making her place in the field of art though at a slow pace.

According to Jatinder Kour 'The earliest memories of my passion for painting and sketching are of me sitting in the class, drawing faces of the beautiful women. Many a times, I was caught redhanded when teachers would find me in- attentive to the lessons being taught there. Or I would challenge my drawing teacher to show me a picture, the replica of which I couldn't make and he would concede grudging.' The memories of Jatinder kour narrate her apptitude towards art. 'I still vividly remember when I was just 11 or 12 years old, I made a pencil sketches of my grandma who gave a very kindly pose while adjusting her dupatta and smiling' she adds. She further recalls 'On my parents insistence, I joined medical but it was a clear case of fitting square pegs in round hole as my interest was elsewhere. So while pursuing science in my B. Sc., I also went for painting lessons. Ihad access to Bauji, as he was lovingly called...Pt .Sansar Chand Baru, a renowned artist of Jammu. I learnt little nuances of oil painting from Bauji and many a time he, very lovingly narrateg to me the stories behind his work which he really enjoyed. He was an institution in himself.'

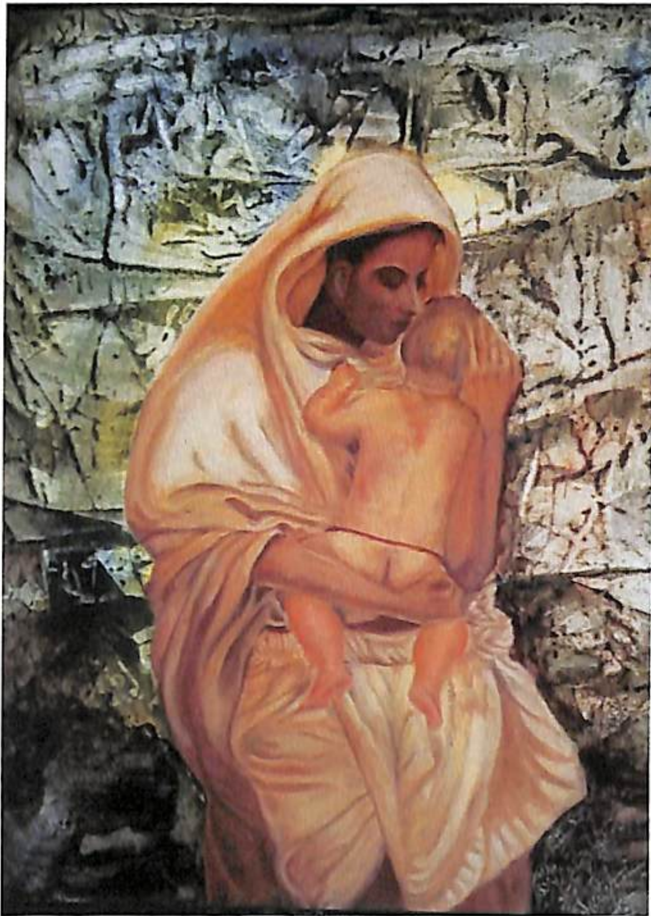


Painting
Oil on Canvas

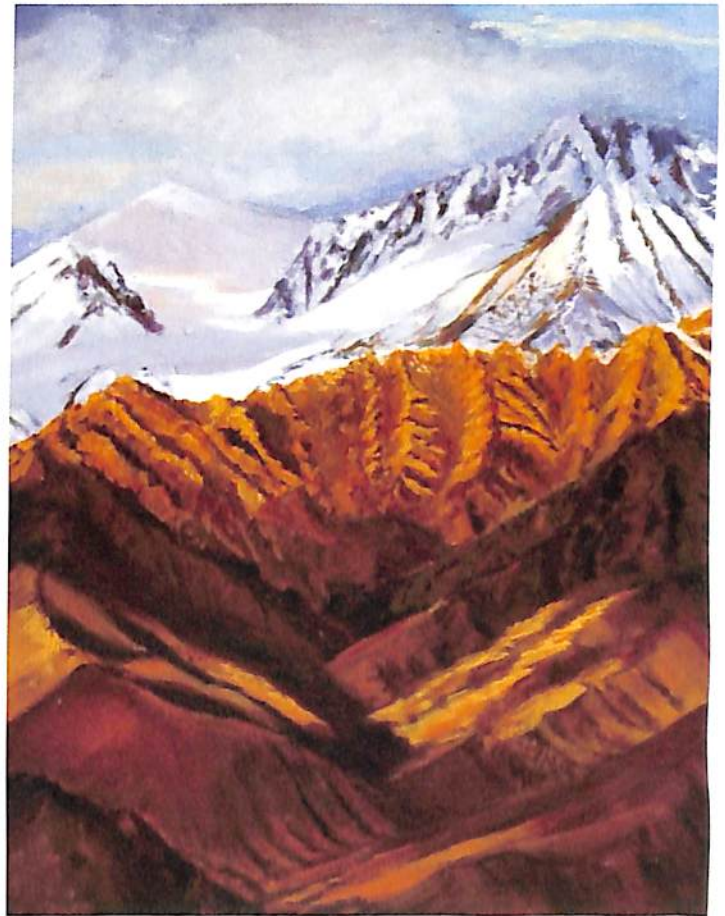
Speakig on her interest in various aspects of nature and its beautiful elements she explains, 'After a while, my family shifted to Trikuta Nagar and I started attending classes at Exhibition Ground under the tutelage of Mr. Bhushan Kesar...and made several paintings there. After my marriage I continued painting and slowly started carving out my niche with Mother and Child series. My inclination is to paint woman in all her avatars and the multifarious roles she plays. At the same time I was inspired by nature again in all its beautiful aspects. My journey continuesd and I am a learner a seeker who would like to delve deep into the misteries behind the beauty of art. Of late I have used abstract technique to give it a contemporary touch.'

Born in 1967, Jatinder Kour is qualified in M.A. and B.Ed. She is a self-taught painter but has worked under the guidance of Late Sansar Chand Baru, later under the guidance of Sh. Bhushan Kesar, renowned painters of J&K state. Jatinder Kour has participated in All India Exhibitions of Art by Indian Academy of Fine Arts, Amritsar, 2012, 13; All India Art Exhibition, Royal Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata, 2012; Annual Art Exhibition by J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, Jammu, 2013.., International Art Exhibition by JKCCA at Kala Kendra, Jammu, 2015. She has been awarded during On the Spot Painting Competition by J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, Jammu, 1980, 82. Her works figure in some private collections in Jammu.

Add: Asstt. Professor, Govt. College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu (J&K).



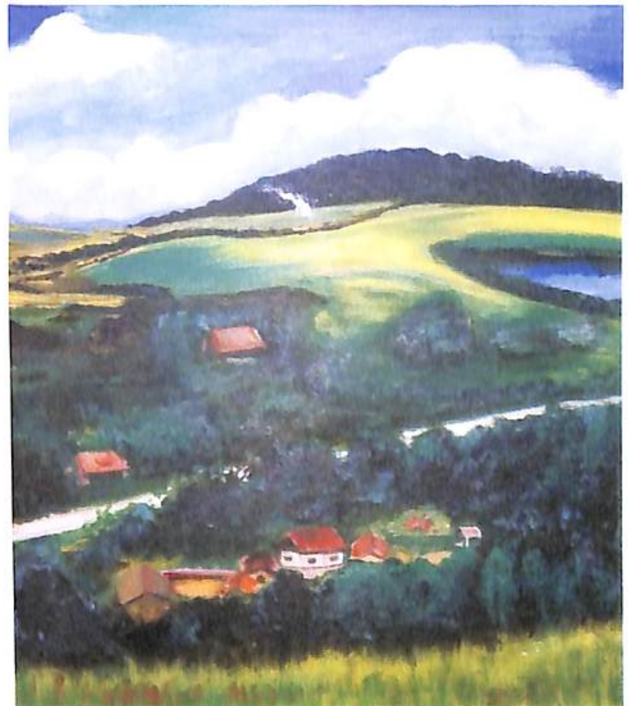
Painting
Oil on Canvas



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Neelama (Urdu Novel)

By Dr Shafaq Sopori

Ghulam Nabi Khayal

Shafaq Sopori is a well meaning and well educated person who has been contributing his mite to the field of literature for a number of years now.

Shafaq writes both in Urdu and Kashmiri but his identity in the literary world of Kashmir and beyond is rather established with his beautiful Urdu poetic compositions which have been well received also by standard literary magazines all over India.

During a very short period of time after his taking to composing poetry and writing prose in different forms, Shafaq seems to have turned himself into a prolific writer whose more than half-a dozen books have already been brought out; among them mention may be made of Kalaam-e-Faiz ka aroozi mutaaliah, , Mousiqi, shairi aur lisaaniant,G M Taoos: Fan aur Shakhsiyat, Jahaat, Dasht main doar kaheen, Makhzan-e-mousiqi and , Urdu Ghazal aur Hindustani Muousiqi.

During the last about three decades, Urdu writing in Kashmir has not produced any outstanding literature which could be compared with standard creations one finds having been penned down by very few Indian or Pakistani writers. Shafaq has on the contrary, a deep insights into the happenings around him which culminate into his poetic response in a candid way. Many of his poems have depicted the pain of Kashmir in his attractive poetic style. Shafaq tries his pen on fiction too. His novel Neelama, is worth reading with interest for its befitting treatment with the subject and illustrating miseries and hardships the lower caste people in India are facing at the hands of upper class Hindu Brahmins in various fields of human life.

Neelama is an unfortunate untouchable tribal (Aadi waasi) girl belonging to a lower caste downtrodden family. Shafaq's artistic but realistic depiction of the life of Indian tribes in his novel makes interesting reading when their miseries and unending agonies are narrated by the author in the character of Neelama around whom rallies the story taking it to an absorbing conclusion

Shafaq is presently working on a comprehensive Urdu novel on Kashmir today; its humiliation and frustration, its tears and wails, its miseries and agonies the Kashmiri nation has been going through for about three decades now.

Shafaq claims that he has contacted and met a number of male and female

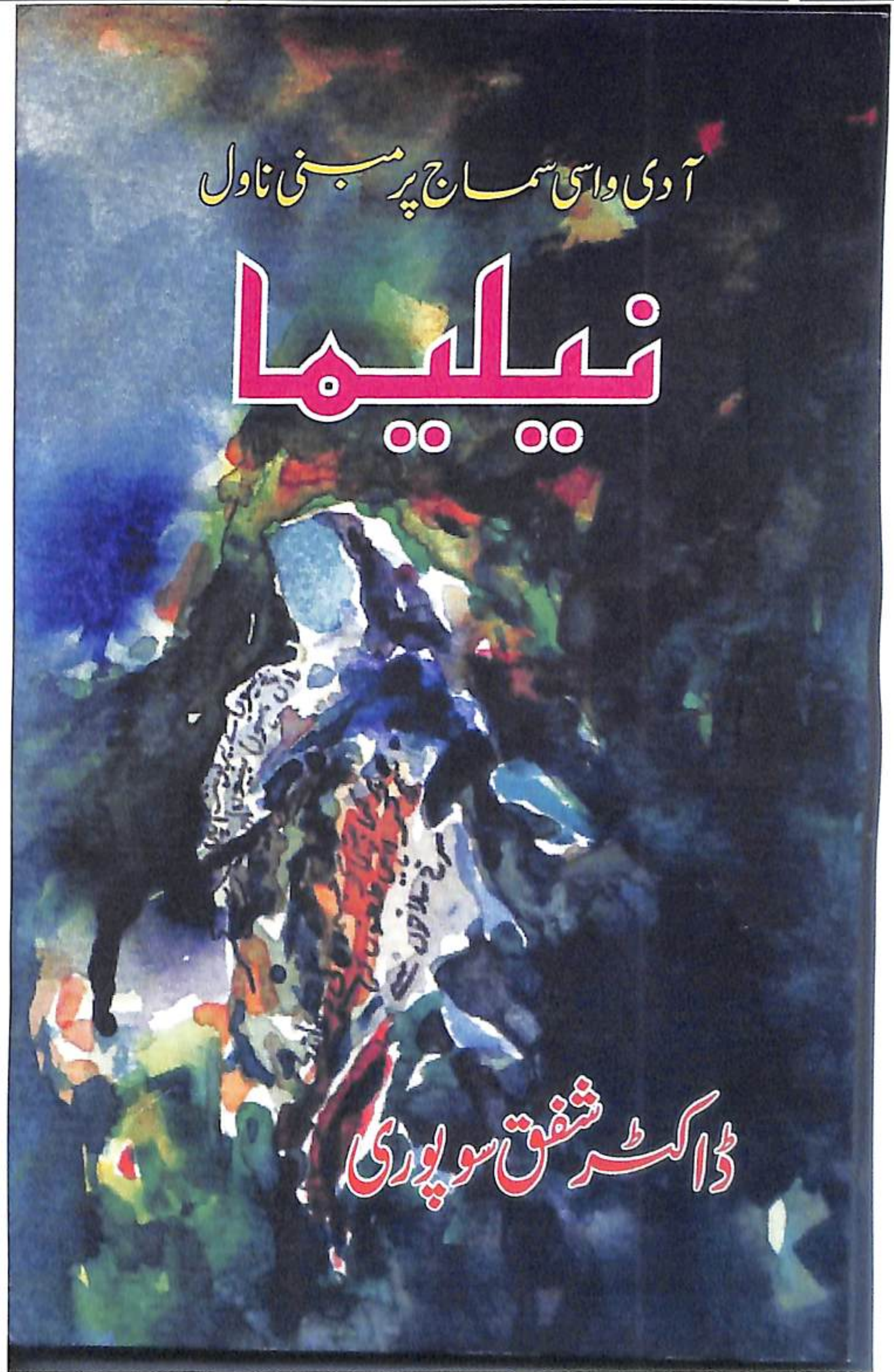
domestic servants having come to Kashmir from Aadi Vaasi areas for earning bred and butter which was not in store for them in those most backward and ignored tribal areas where they belonged to. This has obviously added to the author's credibility as far as his dealing with the subject realistically is concerned. This lot of unfortunate people, inhabitants of far flung border areas between Bihar and West Bengal has been living the life not better than cattle. These innocent and illiterate people have been exploited for a number of years now by upper class Brahmins like animals in all respects of their wretched life.

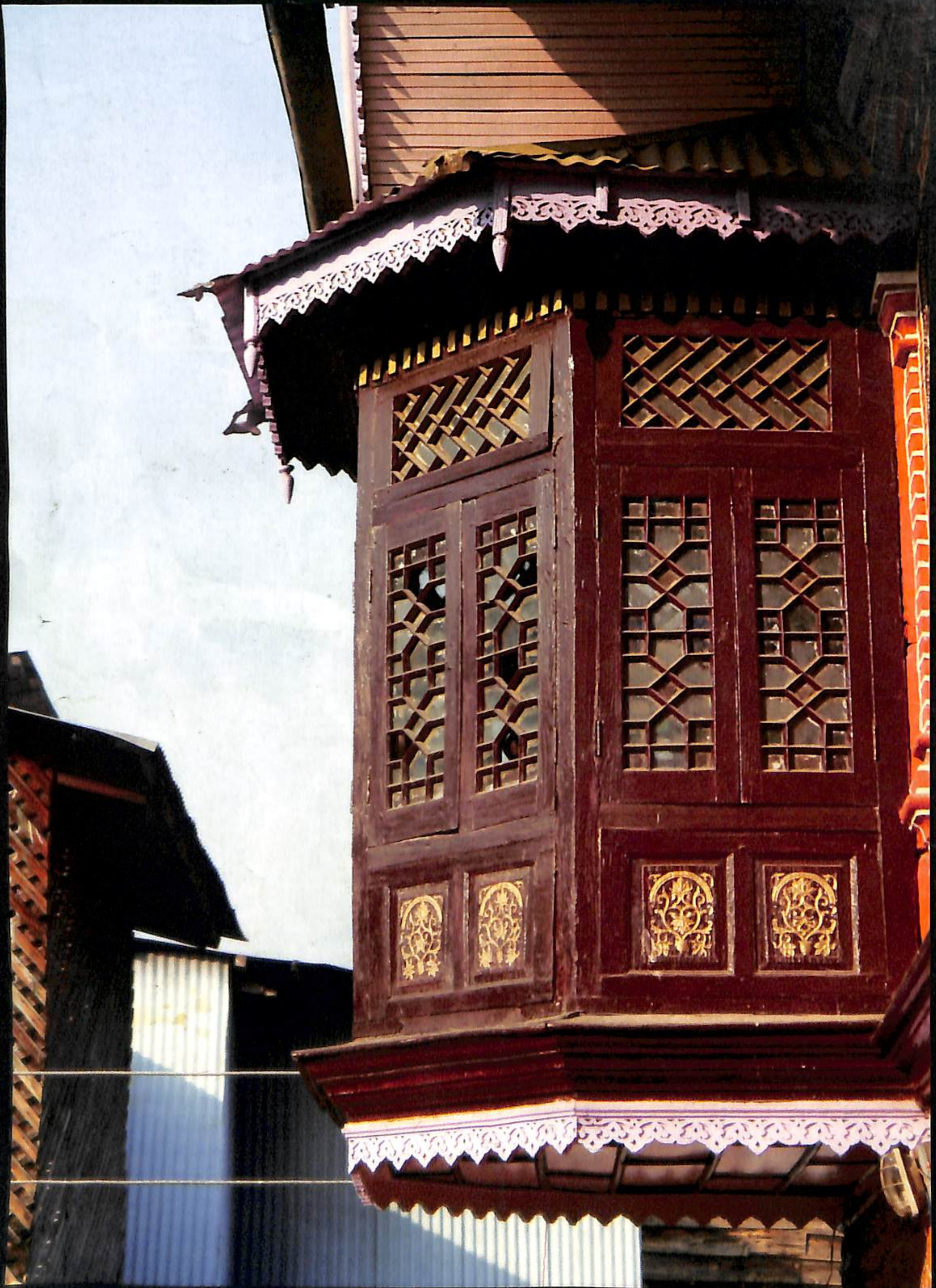
In the literary world of Urdu, there are very few writings we come across on the life and its darkest shades of tribal population of India, though their in depth study can enrich Urdu literature and make it multi dimensional. While doing so, Shafaq has distinguished himself from other fiction writers of Kashmir, for which he deserves kudos.

But the last word:

The author has used innumerable words and idioms in this work which are most unfamiliar to the standard Urdu language. In order to have an authenticated license to make use of new and unidentified words in a particular language it is imperative that the historical back ground of their etymology is defined in proper perspective before such an unheard of effort is made in the world of literature. At the same time, it is quite interesting that without going for a thorough search to trace our exact meaning of such words, the reader does not face any difficulty to fully understand the essence and the meaning of the work. No doubt Shafaq has offered some explanation in this regard. But the question still remains unanswered: can any writer himself coin words for a language which had never been in use earlier. Only renowned linguists can opine on this question, which I am not.

I hope this interesting novel shall be well received by Urdu readers and lovers of this subjugated language.





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